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Proceeding	91205331
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Printed Publication No. 9

Even 12 Years After His Death, Dale Earnhardt's Memory Is Still Very Much Alive

By Jerry Bonkowski , Featured Columnist
Feb 18, 2013

David Taylor/Getty Images

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It remains hard to believe that 12 years ago today—February 18, 2001—Dale Earnhardt was taken from us.

Even though 4,383 days have passed since his death, it still seems like yesterday that one of NASCAR's all-time greats perished in one of the most tragic wrecks in the sport's history—killed on the last turn of the last lap of the sport's biggest race, the Daytona 500.

It seemed like just another typical NASCAR wreck, yet wound up being anything but.

A nearly head-on crash into the outside retaining wall at Daytona International Speedway, the kind of wreck that countless others have walked away from, inexplicably claimed NASCAR's Superman.

How many of us still remember when NASCAR president Mike Helton, mightily trying to remain stoic while holding back a flood of tears, announced an hour after the crash those most searing words: "We've lost Dale Earnhardt."

The fierce competitor, known as The Intimidator, was one of the sport's biggest superstars of all time, winner of a record-tying seven Cup championships and 76 races, was gone in a heartbeat.

How much do you miss Dale Earnhardt?

○ Greatly ○ Sometimes ○ Not at all Submit Vote vote to see results

Countless fans that cheered for years for the steely-eyed driver of the fabled No. 3 Chevrolet reacted as if they had lost a close family member—and to his most ardent of his fans, Earnhardt truly felt like kin.

The man with the huge cookie duster mustache who left the cotton mills of Kannapolis, N.C., to earn his fame in fortune in NASCAR, who had to fight for everything he ever earned as a race car driver, left a huge and massive void that to this day has never been completely filled.

With millions who were stunned at his unexpected passing at the far-too-young age of 49, it's not surprising that many of Earnhardt's most diehard fans ultimately transferred their loyalty to his son and namesake, Ralph Dale Earnhardt Jr.

As if the pressure of coping with his father's tragic loss wasn't enough, the younger Earnhardt was forced to shoulder the burden of carrying on and living up to his father's legacy.

While he has been able to do the former, being named NASCAR's Most Popular Driver for the last 10 years, the latter has not been as easy.

Dale Jr. has yet to win what his and many of his father's former fans have hungrily longed for over the last 12 years—a Sprint Cup championship. And now at the age of 37, he may never will.

After winning 15 Cup races in his first five seasons, Junior has tailed off dramatically, managing just four additional victories in the last eight seasons.

While he carries the same famous name, from a performance standpoint, the younger Earnhardt will likely never come close to equaling the career of his father.

One has to wonder how different the younger Earnhardt's career may have turned out if his father

had survived.

Jamie Squire/Getty Images
One has to wonder how Junior's career may have turned out if his father had not been killed.

To illustrate the elder Earnhardt's popularity, fans still mark the day of his death with reverence. No other NASCAR driver that has perished behind the wheel has ever been remembered so solemnly or for so long.

To this day, more than a decade later, fans still can't completely let go of the man and his legacy.

How else do you explain why Earnhardt-related clothing and memorabilia continue to be among the sport's biggest sellers, and why souvenir trailers carrying Earnhardt legacy merchandise at every Sprint Cup race remain jammed with nearly as many fans as when he was alive?

It's almost as if the man they called The Big E is still with us. While he has passed on, his life, accomplishments and the memories he left continue to live on.

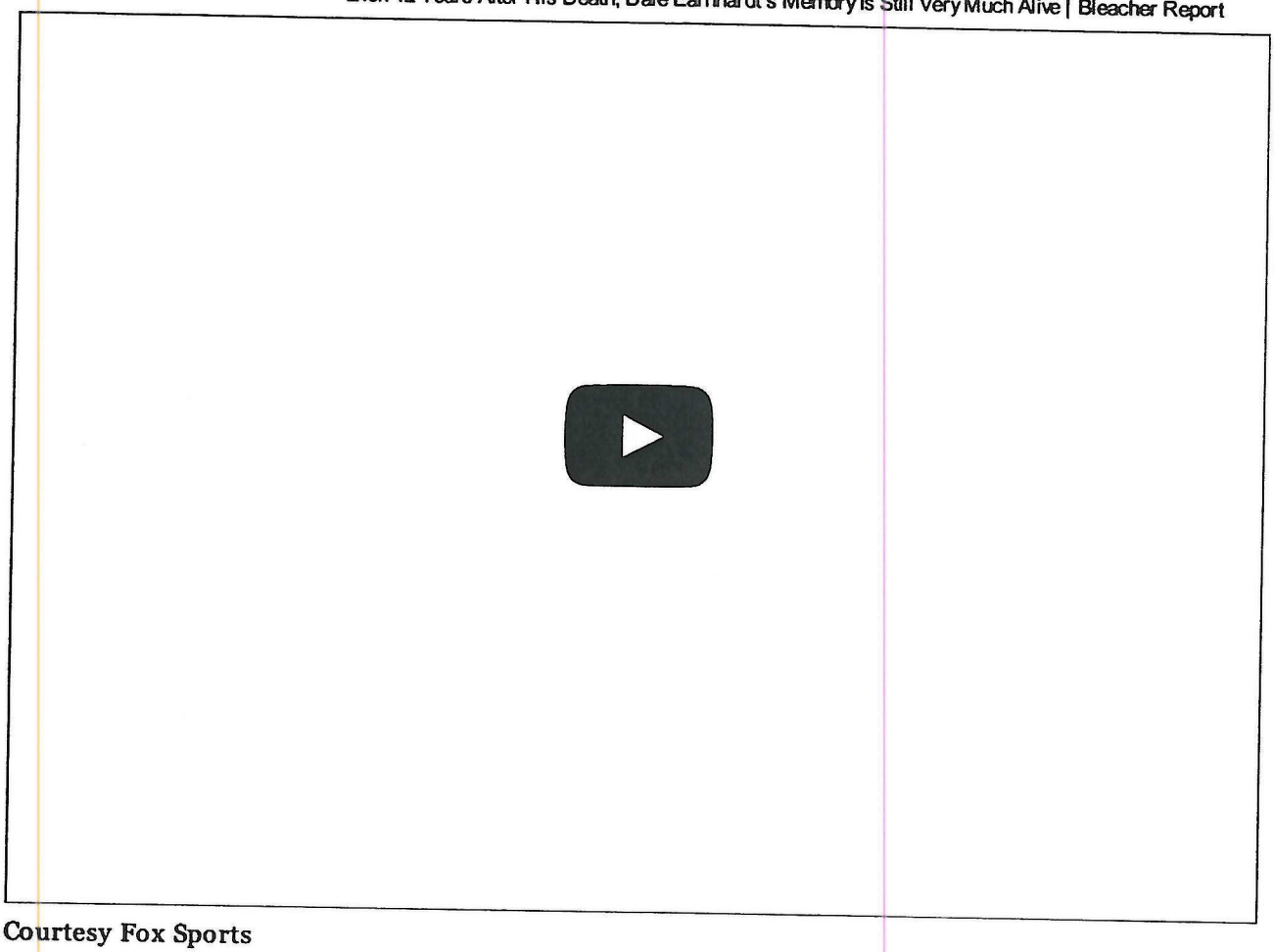
Despite countless hours of investigating, probing and reconstructing the crash, how Earnhardt died still doesn't make sense to many.

Instead of going for what had the potential to be his second Daytona 500 win, Earnhardt (in uncharacteristic fashion) played blocker for then-DEI driver and eventual race winner Michael Waltrip and runner-up, Dale Jr.

In letting Waltrip and Junior enjoy their day in the sun, it ultimately cost Earnhardt his life.

His death shocked not only the NASCAR community but also the world as a whole, in many ways similar to the music world losing Elvis Presley.

I still vividly recall Earnhardt's near-prophetic words, just hours before his death, in a pre-race TV interview on Fox Sports:



Courtesy Fox Sports

"You're gonna see something you probably have never seen on Fox," Earnhardt said with a smirk on his face. In some way, you almost have to wonder if he subconsciously knew his time on earth was about to come to an end and that he had accepted God's plan and fate for him.

If there's some consolation to take in Earnhardt's death, it's that he did not die in vain. His death brought about the largest safety initiative ever seen in any form of motorsports, including:

- Development of so-called soft walls (otherwise known as SAFER barriers) that greatly reduced the impact and resulting damage to driver and car in a crash.

- Head and neck restraint systems, most commonly known as HANS devices, that keep drivers' heads and necks near-immobile in order to lessen movement forward or side to side in a crash. A significant cause of Earnhardt's death was due to the violent movement of his neck upon impact.

- Similar to black boxes in airplanes, in-car data recorders were developed and installed in every car and truck in NASCAR's three professional series so that engineers could study crash data to make even further safety refinements as needed.

- The development of a state of the art race car that has been continually updated to keep drivers as safe as possible.

The results speak for themselves.

Since Earnhardt's passing—the fourth NASCAR driver to die from a crash in a nine-month period, including Adam Petty, the grandson of the legendary Richard Petty—no other drivers in the Sprint Cup, Nationwide or Camping World Truck series have died behind the wheel.

They have Earnhardt to thank for that, for it was his death that prompted NASCAR to take action on safety. If their biggest, seemingly most invincible star could die, anyone could.

Today, the only other major motorsports series that has been death-free longer than NASCAR has been Formula One, dating back to 1994 and the loss of Brazilian great Ayrton Senna.

Other forms of motorsports have not fared as well since Earnhardt's death:

- IndyCar has lost three drivers: Tony Renna (2003), Paul Dana (2006) and Dan Wheldon (2011).

- National Hot Rod Association drag racing has lost four pro drivers: John Lingenfelter (2003), Darrell Russell (2004), Eric Medlen (2007) and Scott Kalitta (2008).

Even with all the time that has passed, understanding and coming to terms with Earnhardt's death just doesn't seem to get any easier. And today, as we once again mark his passing, one wonders if it ever will.

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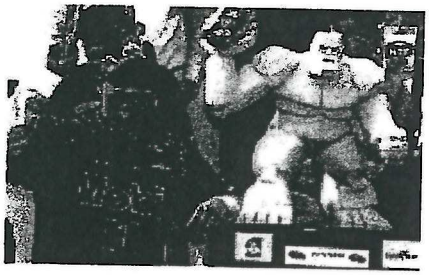

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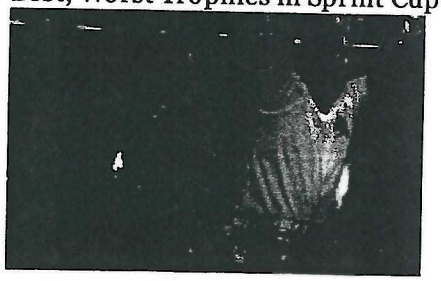

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Printed Publication No. 10

10 years after crash, NASCAR still coping with Earnhardt's death

By **Steve Hummer**, Special to CNN
February 20, 2011 2:20 a.m. EST

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Stock car racing legend Dale Earnhardt died February 18, 2001
- Crew chief: "Dale Earnhardt was to NASCAR what Elvis Presley was to rock-and-roll"
- NASCAR.com's Earnhardt tribute includes photos, memories, and reflections on his legacy

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Editor's note: *Steve Hummer, a reporter for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, was covering the Daytona 500 in 2001 when Dale Earnhardt died.*

(CNN) -- Ten years ago, stock car racing's last great roughneck hit the wall and the wall won.

Dale Earnhardt would not grow old and slow, clogging up life's left lane. He would not gracefully slide into a senior citizenship of driving to the Wal-Mart in a Grand Marquis with plastic flowers waving from the antenna.

He would die a legend's death at the age of 49, on the last turn of the last lap of the greatest race his kind knows. He died running, as he used to put it, WFO -- Wide (Bleeping) Open.

In third place of the 2001 Daytona 500, shielding the two cars ahead of him -- both owned by him, and one driven by his namesake son -- Earnhardt yielded not an inch of asphalt. Sterling Marlin bumped him ever so slightly from the rear, and in the ensuing chain reaction of bumper cars at 160 mph, Earnhardt's famous black No. 3 Chevy was sent up the track and nose-first into the wall.

The sport had seen a thousand worse-looking wrecks in which everyone walked away angry but unmarked. Something was bad wrong with this one, though. Witnesses knew it immediately after the driver was lifted from the wreckage and rushed to the hospital, when workers draped a tarp over Earnhardt's car like cops covering a

body at a crime scene.

Two hours later, NASCAR President Mike Helton faced the world and announced, "We've lost Dale Earnhardt."

At the 10-year mark of the death of a seven-time Sprint Cup (formerly Winston Cup) champion, there will be many tributes laid at the feet of Earnhardt's memory. Some will come from the television booth on February 20 at the next running of the Daytona 500.

NASCAR's tribute to Earnhardt

"Dale Earnhardt was to NASCAR what Elvis Presley was to rock-and-roll," said Larry McReynolds, Earnhardt's crew chief when he won his only Daytona 500 in 1998, and currently a racing broadcaster with Fox.

"When Elvis passed, rock-and-roll didn't stop, but it was different. After Dale died, racing didn't stop. We trudged on to Rockingham five days later. But it was different. It's still different today."

This morbid anniversary also is a milepost at which to slow for just a moment and consider how Earnhardt's sport has radically changed in the decade since his death. In doing that, those who came to racing with him may well find themselves missing Earnhardt all over again.

One positive consequence: The sport is definitely safer. Earnhardt's was the fourth death suffered on a NASCAR track in nine months. There have been no on-track deaths in NASCAR's three major series in the 10 years since his death.

Losing Earnhardt this way was to NASCAR what losing Michael Jordan to a heart attack in mid-dunk would have been to the NBA. The soul-search that followed the death of racing's biggest star resulted in extensive revisions in NASCAR's safety practices.

Mandatory now is a head and neck restraint system that might have saved Earnhardt from his fatal basilar skull fracture. And the pace quickened on installing so-called "soft wall" technology at tracks, barriers that absorb more of the force of a collision.

Over that same period, NASCAR has seen its popularity seemingly peak. Once the hottest growth property on the sporting landscape, it has faced a steady erosion in television ratings and track attendance. In the four years since NASCAR signed a multibillion-dollar media deal, average race viewership has fallen from 7.85 million at its height to 5.99 million last year, according to the Sports Business Journal.

In a time of tight money, there were more gaps apparent in the circuit's grandstands in 2010. The attendance still can be huge, and television viewership is surpassed only by the NFL, but the drops are noticeable. With 140,000 at last year's Brickyard 400, that throng still was roughly half that of the 2007 race.

No one has pinned the slump on Earnhardt's death. Rather, that tragedy is coincidental to a general loss of connection between the old-school, rank-and-file fan and a sport that had seemed to homogenize both its cars and its drivers.

What died February 18, 2001, was an important bit of racing's soul.

"Dale Earnhardt's story is really the story of so many of the great drivers in NASCAR history, someone who came up really tough," said Daniel Pierce, head of the history department at the University of North Carolina-Asheville and author of "Real NASCAR: White Lightning, Red Clay and Big Bill France."

Earnhardt, the son of dirt track campaigner Ralph Earnhardt, was a ninth-grade dropout, divorced twice before he was 30, a subsistence racer early in his career who took mill work and cleaned industrial boilers to keep himself fed.

"There were times," Earnhardt once told an interviewer, "we probably should have been on welfare."

He'd become fabulously wealthy, a shrewd capitalist who, as McReynolds said, "proved to drivers that it was a business, too." He was the Bill Gates of personal branding.

Still, many of those in the infield continued to see themselves in him.

"Here's a guy who really lived a classic country music song, Pierce said. "His whole persona early on was very rough around the edges. For a lot of people -- particularly the traditional NASCAR fans, the people who really grew up with it -- it was really something visceral with them. This was more than just a pastime; it was a metaphor for life. And here's someone who lived this very rough existence, who was on the fringes of society, who succeeded beyond anyone's wildest dreams."

Earnhardt drove as if his next meal depended on being out front, even when it didn't. He was one hard-charging SOB, a signature moment coming in 1999 when he spun-out Terry Labonte on the final lap to win at Bristol. "I wasn't trying to wreck him, I just wanted to rattle his cage," The Intimidator said then in one of his classic utterances.

Back when they both were racing, Darrell Waltrip once declared, "With Earnhardt, every lap is a controlled crash."

The face of NASCAR used to have the sharp features of a bird of prey, possessing also this moustache-thatched smirk that told media he was not a man for idle chatter and warned other drivers not to get too comfortable when he put that big black car six inches off their rear quarterpanel.

Now that face belongs to the impeccable Jimmie Johnson, no less driven to win, a Sprint Cup champion five years running, but as buttoned down as a Savile Row suit.

Like a good many of his generation of drivers, Johnson came up on the sunnier side of the middle class, a kid who cut his teeth on speed by racing motorcycles in the California desert with the support of hard-working parents.

Where Earnhardt would spar with media and NASCAR officials alike, Johnson's public presence is seamless. He has done well for himself off the track as well, marrying a former Wilhelmina model six years ago. The couple had their first child last year.

For those who would draw too stark a contrast between Johnson and Earnhardt, McReynolds cautions, "Fans see (Johnson's) beautiful wife, his beautiful child, the big motorcoach, the jet airplane. They don't realize his mom drove a school bus and his dad worked on heavy machinery to take him motocross racing.

"We have to put it on our (the broadcasters') shoulders to help bring back the personalities of who these drivers are."

Earnhardt's was a two-sided mystique. His ability to polarize a grandstand is unmatched today. What is forgotten in the lionization that naturally follows death is the counter-Earnhardt culture that drove much of NASCAR's passion.

After Earnhardt's death, fans paid homage to his No. 3 by standing and holding three fingers aloft on the third lap of every race. Pierce

fondly recalls the first race he went to -- Bristol, 1994 -- and one particular nearby fan who rose every time Earnhardt drove past. And this man required only one finger to salute the driver.

"There were a number of fans who would pull for anybody who would beat Earnhardt," McReynolds said.

The history prof and race fan says there are a couple drivers who could fit the role of black hat in today's weekly on-track dramas: Kyle Busch and Brad Keselowski, both known to get sideways with the spectators. Tony Stewart also can rouse some rabble. Still, there is no one who can fan the flames of partisanship like Earnhardt did.

And Dale Jr., well, he has yet to fill his father's firesuit. His inherited popularity has not translated to great performance. The last of his 18 Sprint Cup victories came 93 races ago (2008) and he has missed the series' season-ending chase for the championship the last two years.

His father's death "is part of a process that NASCAR is really suffering from now," Pierce said. "They may have appealed to some new fans but I think those people's commitment is very shallow. There are people the sport has lost who once felt racing was akin to religion.

"I've been to (Kentucky's) Rupp Arena, to (North Carolina's) Carmichael Auditorium. I went to Alabama and have seen Alabama-Auburn football. I've seen people passionate about their sports. But the thing that caught my eye when I first went to races was how that was even more characteristic of NASCAR.

"I don't quite see that as much anymore."

They can hang luxury condos from the rim of the tracks. They can expand beyond racing's motherland of the old South, introduce a new playoff-like format and even bring Toyota into the all-American mix.

But while the sport gets all clean and corporate, the traditional race fans just want to find that one good ol' driver who can make them care. That one personality who will inspire them to carve out a few precious days off, pack up the truck with beer and barbeque and blow the budget to watch the cars go fast ... turn left ... and repeat.

Printed Publication No. 11

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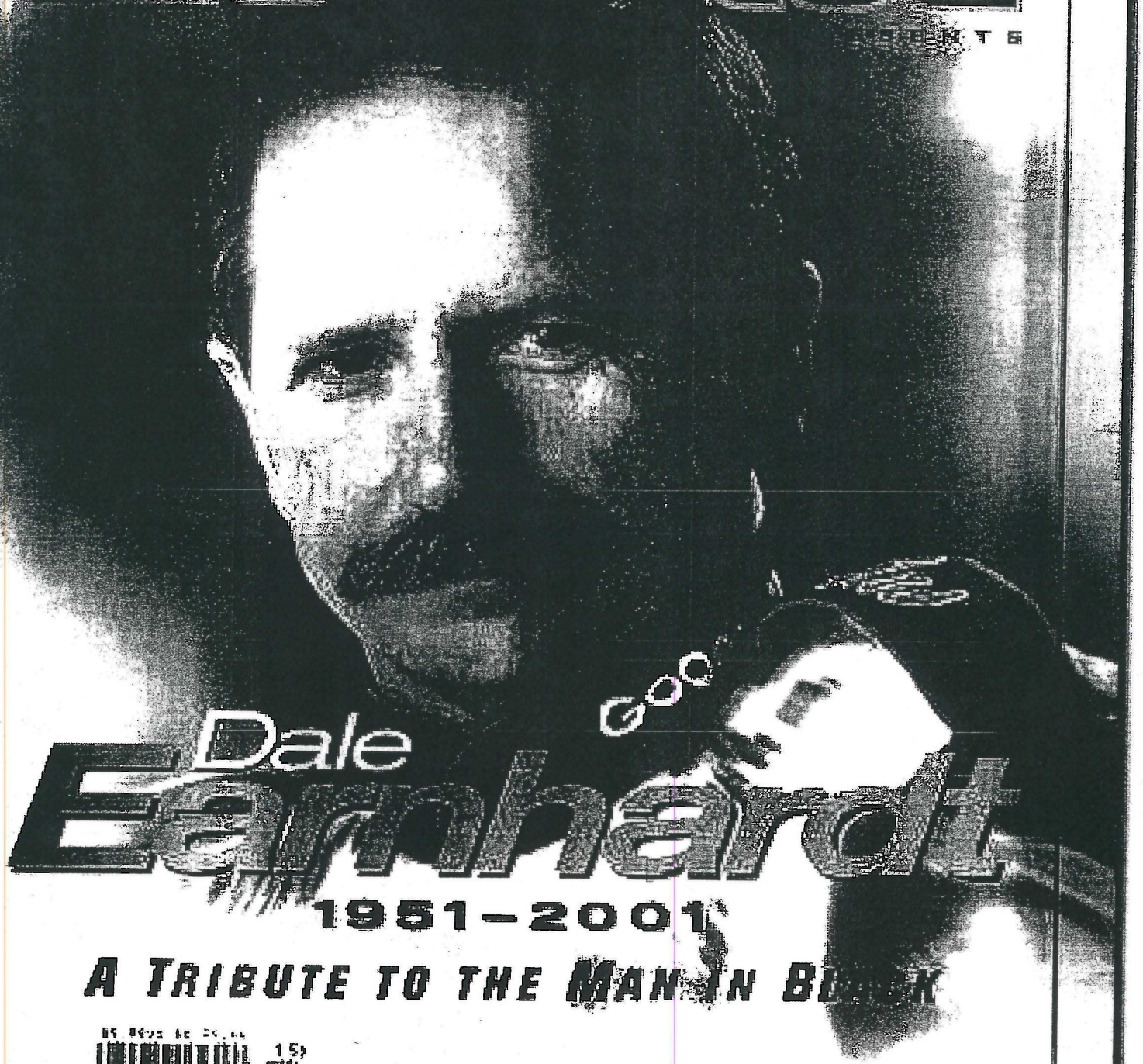

Dale Earnhardt

1951–2001

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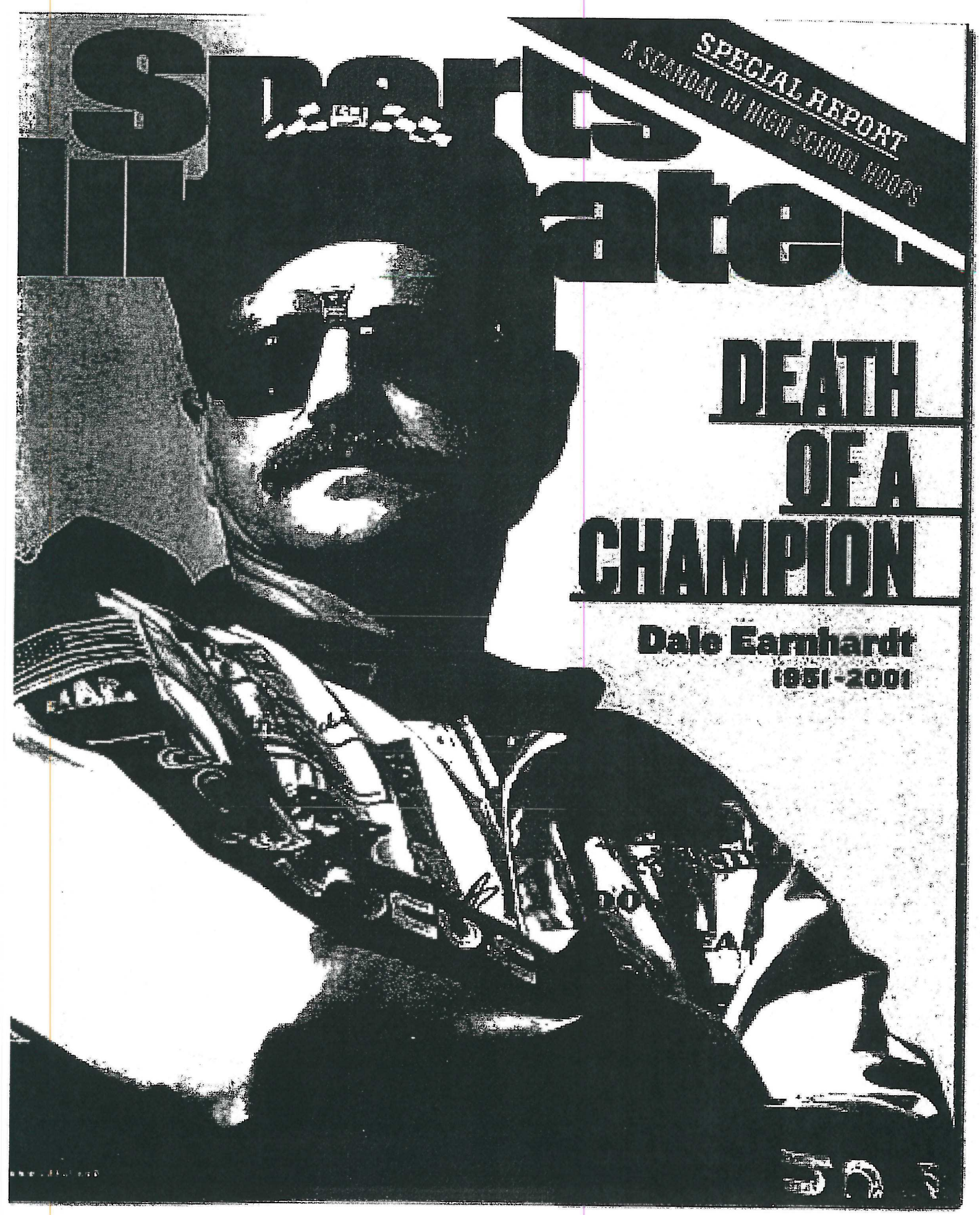
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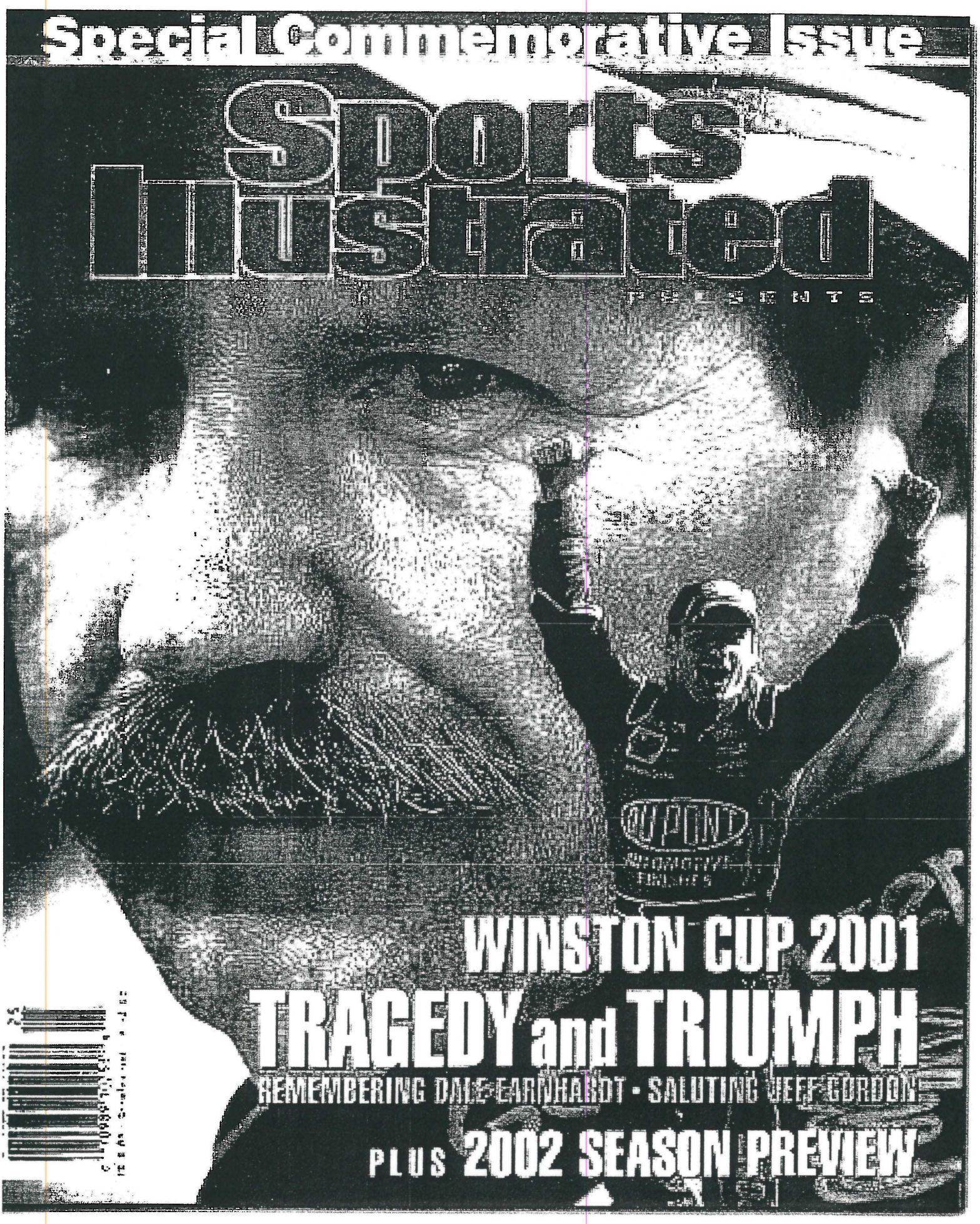

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OPP003044

Printed Publication No. 12

High tech taps into toy fair

February 14, 2000: 6:54 p.m. ET

Robotic dogs, and computer keyboards for children, are poised to hit stores

NEW YORK (CNNfn) - A robotic dog that acts independently and learns from you, a New York Yankees Monopoly game, and a simple stock market board game for budding teenage entrepreneurs will probably end up on a few holiday wish lists next year.

These toys are just a tiny fraction of the thousands on display Monday at the 2000 American International Toy Fair, which runs through Thursday at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. The show is not open to the general public.

Extreme high-tech goods grabbed much of the attention, but some new twists on old favorites also made a strong showing.

The dog robot, Sony's AIBO ERS-111, acts more or less like a regular dog, rolling on the carpet, scratching, lifting a hind leg and responding to master's scratching and petting. But its artificial intelligence brain allows it to learn good and bad behavior. Taking cues from its owner, the dog gradually learns and grows through several different learning stages.

The toy, which actually launched last May, retails for $2,500.

An unusual mix of high-tech and traditional comes with the popular game The Stone. Produced by Winnipeg, Manitoba-based Abject.com, The Stone features a simple stone marked with different characters and symbols. Each of the stones, which are sold in 10 different countries, has a unique marking. Users log onto The Stone's Web site by clicking on the matching characters. The site features intricate puzzles about science, history and other subjects. The goal is to solve each of the puzzles until the mystery of The Stone is revealed, said Rod Bruinooge, the game's creator and Abject.com's chief executive officer.

Another high-tech offering is KB Gear's Pooh Learning Keyboard, a colorful keyboard for children ages 3-8, with sturdy keys and Disney's Pooh characters on the face. The keyboard's bright color makes it easier for children to learn how to use a computer. The company also offers a sketch board on which children draw or trace with a wand. The images appear on a computer screen. Both retail for about $50, and will be available this summer.

An old favorite, Monopoly, has again proved why it remains the world's most popular board game.

USAopoly, which holds the Hasbro license to Monopoly, Scrabble and Clue, offers 50 different Monopoly titles. Among the newer titles available this year are a New York Yankees Monopoly and a Dale Earnhardt version, in which players buy up property and memorabilia of the popular NASCAR driver. Earnhardt is the first person ever to be featured on a Monopoly board.

And Stock Market Madness is a new game produced by Wall Street Toys Inc. Players buy and sell shares in different companies, go to jail for insider trading, and engage in some heavy profit-taking. The game's developers hope teachers will find the game simple enough to teach teenagers the basic

workings of Wall Street. It retails for $34.95 and is currently available in stores.

Toy manufacturers look forward to the Toy Fair as a place to showcase the products they've been working on all year, and is a glimpse at their financial future as they hope retailers pick up on certain items to be the new hot toys for the holidays.

Toys put up a strong showing last year, with 1999 sales increasing 8.8 percent to $16.9 billion from the year before, said Peter Eio, chairman of the Toy Manufacturers Association, the New York City-based trade group that sponsors the show.

Action figures represented the greatest strength within that increase, with sales 23.8 percent higher in 1999 than the year before.

That Eio said, reflects the strength of licensing agreements for toys related to Star Wars, Power Rangers and the Worldwide Wrestling Federation and World Championship Wrestling. ■

Find this article at:
http://cnnfn.cnn.com/2000/02/14/companies/toyfair

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Printed Publication No. 13

Tragedy Sells

Even in death, Dale Earnhardt remained the master of merchandising himself.

MAY 2001 | BY MULTIPLE AUTHORS ()

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It is said that Elvis Presley earned more money dead than he did alive. Most likely, that will not be said of Dale Earnhardt – the purse money alone during his 22-year career amounted to a remarkable $41 million – but the puzzling and troubling accident that resulted in "The Intimidator's" death at the Daytona 500 this year certainly sparked a bizarre orgy of buying and selling of stuff even remotely connected to the 49-year-old stock-car hero.

Prior to his death, online listings of Earnhardt collectibles had averaged about 10,000 items a week in 2001. In the week after his death, more than 200,000 items popped up on-screen for sale.

An example of the hysteria went like this: In an auction that ended a few minutes before Earnhardt's crash, a seller tried to get $49 – a buck off the original retail price – for a 1:24 scale model of Earnhardt's rare 2001 Busch Clash car, which was sponsored by Oreo. In seven previous days, the seller didn't get a single bite. After the crash, other sellers offering the same Oreo car saw dozens of bidders rushing to buy them – with prices climbing to $1200!

Opportunists scored big: A New Jersey seller of a single Earnhardt trading card, which fetched nearly $200 the night he died, noted in his listing that the item would not be shipped right away "as we are in Daytona in Turn One [using a laptop] and our housesitter is computer illiterate." Another seller of an Oreo car, listed with a starting bid of $950 the day after the Earnhardt tragedy, noted: "I am only going to sell a few and leave the man in peace." A seller from the Atlanta area, who got $2000 for a $3.99 toy car, warned potential deadbeat bidders: "This is a high auction, and legal means will be took to make you pay."

Some failed to cash in, but not for lack of trying: A seller in Wytheville, Virginia, asked – but did not get – $75,000 for a 1983 Wrangler poster of Earnhardt. A guy in a bar in Oaktown, Indiana, tried to get $30,000 for a life-size Earnhardt "anhieser busch" cardboard cutout. A collector in Ohio sought $20,000 for his collection of limited-edition Earnhardt model cars. And one would-be artist painted a picture of Earnhardt and listed it, in vain, at $20,000.

Best return on investment may have been to the Indianapolis owner of an $11 Earnhardt Hallmark Christmas ornament, which started out at a bid price of three cents. The seller was stunned when someone bid $14,599.99 (although the bidder did not respond to our efforts to confirm this). A

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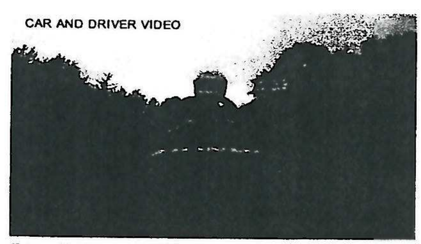

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seller in Charlotte, North Carolina, turned down $14,999.99 for what he said was Earnhardt's last autographed race uniform. The seller admitted he had tried unsuccessfully to sell it a few days before the race for a few hundred dollars. His reason for selling was priceless: "I'm a huge [Jeff] Gordon fan and really don't deserve such a fine piece of Earnhardt memorabilia."

Most intriguing item was an Earnhardt Winston Cup championship ring from 1991, offered by a New York City jeweler, who said he got it from an Earnhardt crew member. It sold for $5100.

The array of Earnhardt-autographed items changing hands was mind-boggling: $7100 for a hood, $6302 for a helmet, $4501 for a used door panel.

Meanwhile, Earnhardt's death set off a spending crush at racetrack concessions. At North Carolina Speedway a week after the fatal crash, Bruce Young of Pole Night Distributors, a major purveyor of NASCAR merchandise, said, "The people went crazy. At Daytona, right after the wreck, everybody flooded over to the souvenir trailers and wiped 'em out. Here, the flaps came open on Friday morning, and it started. They're buying everything. That's what normally happens when something like this happens to one of the drivers. But I tell you what: If Dale is sitting up in heaven right now looking down, he'd be proud, because his prices jumped the most."

Earnhardt's 2001 model car, which Young was selling for $60 before the Daytona 500, jumped to $400 on Sunday night.

After local television stations did features on the memorabilia crush, eager buyers went so far as to show up at Pole Night's warehouse in Monroe, North Carolina. Young said someone even tried to break in — "with a guy sleeping inside. We've been in this tent every night. We got to." His die-cast cars were selling for $200 to $500, and his sales table had to be restocked three times over the weekend.

"Earnhardt was already No. 1 in souvenir sales to begin with," Young said. "Normally, his sales are 30 percent of what we sell. It jumped to about 55 percent. We sold out of three different coats. And normally, we don't sell a lot at this track — there's not a lot of money here." Still, there were three Earnhardt souvenir trailers at the North Carolina track instead of the usual one. All of them had plenty of hats for sale at regular prices, but no die-cast cars, and T-shirts were scarce.

If it seemed to some that Earnhardt's followers were dancing on his grave, remember that the seven-time Winston Cup champion was a master at selling himself — one year he sold $12 million worth of stuff. "It's kind of fitting," said one souvenir hunter, "because Dale Earnhardt himself was the master of commercialism."

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Printed Publication No. 14

ired Vezina, along with a but relatively young group 's, have helped Dexter to a cord and the No. 2 seed in s C.

ning Kristy play, Margaret can see why her daughter a natural scorer -- Kristy same shooter's touch and nds her mother had as a But for both mother and r, the records aren't nt. The Tigers are focused ng back to the Class C ampionship game, which n in 1998.

asn't really said anything

Chris Patterson (Bangor Christian), Daniel Stetter (Bonny Eagle), Mark Straub (Central)

Girls

Melissa Blackstone (Presque Isle), Lani Boardman (York), Andra Cater (Mount View), Megan Carley (Lisbon), Abbey Collin (Noble), Kelly Cyr (Wisdom), Becky Loch (Ellsworth), Briana Marshall (Sumner), Renee Mick (Bangor Christian), Ashley Bennett (Winslow), Caroline Thorlaut (Waterville)

Pratt coaching skiing at Bapst

A story in Tuesday's NEWS incorrectly stated that Bruce Pratt will be coaching indoor track and field at John Bapst Memorial High School this winter. Pratt is the head skiing coach for the winter season and will be coaching outdoor track and field in the spring.

Rhett Mordland had a goal and an Jeremy McCormick assisted on Straub made 13 saves on 17 shots.

Earnhardt magic still charms fans

By Mike Harris
The Associated Press

With every pass, block or get-out-of-his-way bump, The Intimidator showed he still has it.

The 140,000 fans packed into Talladega Superspeedway were riveted by each move, responding with a cheer, groan or knowing nod to a neighbor.

Every time Dale Earnhardt rushed through the field from the rear last Sunday, people would stand and holler, many raising a hand in the air with three fingers extended, a tribute to his black No. 3 Chevrolet.

He's 49 and six years past his last Winston Cup championship, but Earnhardt continues to thrill fans as no other driver can. It shouldn't be any different Sunday in Rockingham, N.C.

"They call Jimmy Spencer 'Mr. Excitement,' but nobody excites a crowd like Dale Earnhardt," said Richard Childress, the team owner for whom Earnhardt has won six of his seven championships.

In the latest work of art by the superspeedway master, Earnhardt left even his detractors shaking their heads in awe and admiration.

With 10 laps remaining and 25 drivers crowded into the fast-moving lead pack, Earnhardt was 23rd.

He moved up to 18th with five laps left and appeared content simply to gain a few more spots and pick up much-needed points in his fight with leader Bobby Labonte.

But then, amazingly, Earnhardt began to shoot forward, slashing through the field and picking up positions by the bunch.

When he surged past son Dale Jr. to take the lead with one lap left, a roar rose from the vast Talladega grandstand. And when Earnhardt took the checkered flag, the place went wild, with strangers high-fiving each other.

It wasn't just another stock-car victory for Earnhardt, who now has 76 of them. Somehow, this one was special.

As the Victory Circle celebration went on far across the track from the main grandstand, thousands of people remained standing, chanting: "Earnhardt! Earnhardt! Earnhardt!"

When he made the trip to the pressbox for the victory interview, Earnhardt was greeted by several thousand people screaming his name and cheering. He was forced to climb onto the van that brought him to the back of the grandstand, and he did an impromptu jig that brought cries of joy from the fans.

Finally, he walked into the pressbox. But the sound from outside persisted, this time with chants of "Dale! Dale! Dale!"

The object of all this adulation smiled happily, took in the relative quiet of the pressbox and said, "That was fun."

Above all, this man — thought to be on the downside of his career only two years ago — has been reborn as a race driver. He is part of a championship battle that many would like to see him win, and he is racing at the front of the pack again every week.

The victory at Talladega was only his second win of the season, but Earnhardt now has 22 top-10 finishes and 12 top-fives in 30 starts.

"He's driving as well as I've ever seen him," said three-time Winston Cup champion Darrell Waltrip, who at 53 is closing out his career without a win since 1992.

"It doesn't look to me like he's lost anything. Most of us feel like we can still get the job done as we get older, but he's doing it. In fact, it looks to me like Earnhardt's getting better."

ley

d from Page C5

said Ordie has lost 33 since early August and had- solid food for two weeks riday's incident, subsisting on nutrition shakes.

Skip is optimistic that his 'll spend his winter in the confines of the Royals' m off Route 197 in Jones-

[been] hired to coach," d, "We hope he gets better le to coach."

Alley has led the Jones- ls Royals to 13 Eastern Maine and nine state titles since the school was formed in 1969.

The Royals most recently played in state championship games in 1998 and 1999, and won five straight state crowns from 1970-74.

Skip Alley said the close-knit communities of Beals and Jonesport have rallied to support his father and the rest of the family.

But every time he visits his dad at EMMC, Skip knows exactly what Ordie is feeling.

"I think one of the hardest parts is he has a room that overlooks the river, and it's really pretty," Skip said.

"And when fishing's in your blood, it's hard."

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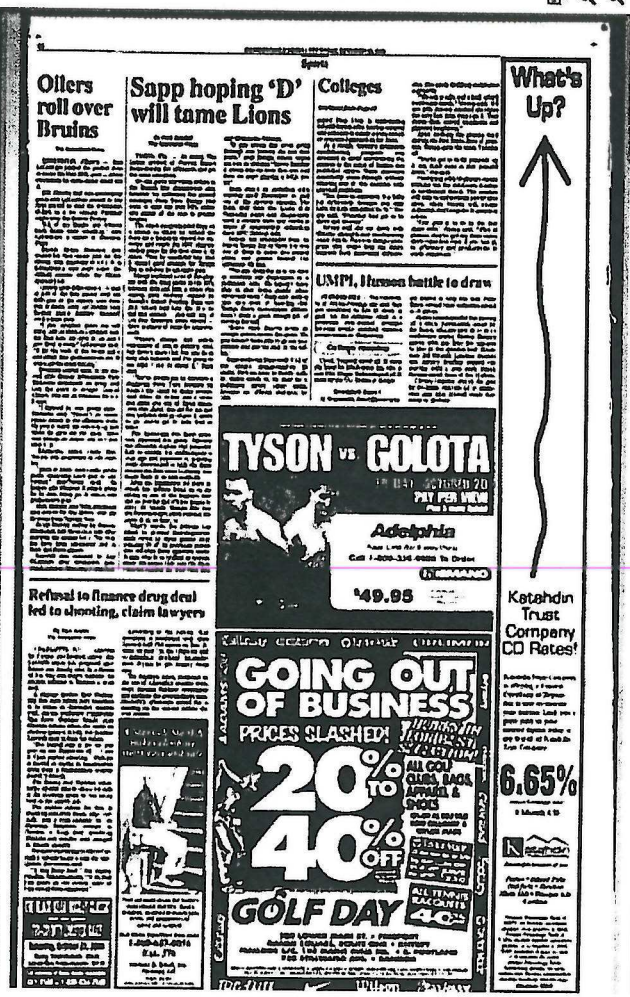

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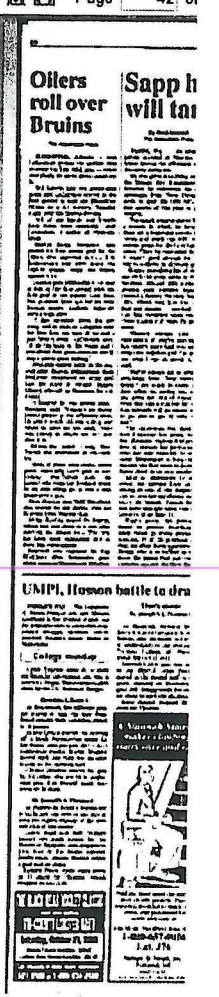

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The New Encyclopædia Britannica

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The meticulousness with which the early Flemish painters recorded nature, their innate sense of design, and their highly compressed symbolism was continued by their followers, each of whom added his own special direction to what he had inherited. Among the masters who were active up until the end of the Burgundian-Flemish political alliance are Petrus Christus (*c.* 1420–1472/73), Dirck Bouts (*c.* 1400–75), Hugo van der Goes (*c.* 1440–82), and Hans Memling (1430/35–1494).

Earnhardt, Dale, in full RALPH DALE EARNHARDT (b. April 29, 1951, Kannapolis, N.C., U.S.—d. Feb. 18, 2001, Daytona Beach, Fla.), American stock-car racer who was the dominant driver in the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) during the 1980s and '90s.

Ralph Earnhardt, Dale's father, raced stock cars in the American southeast during the 1960s and helped to foster his son's passion for the sport. The younger Earnhardt dropped out of high school in 1967 in order to pursue his interest in auto racing. He made his NASCAR Winston Cup debut at the 1975 World 600 in Charlotte, N.C. He continued as a part-time driver on the circuit until he landed a full-time position in the Winston Cup series in 1979. That year he collected 17 top-10 finishes and earned the Rookie of the Year title. The next year he raced to five victories and 19 top-five finishes in winning his first Winston Cup title. Earnhardt drove to six more Winston Cup titles (1986–87, 1990–91, 1993–94), equaling the career mark of Richard Petty.

Earnhardt was a popular, if controversial, athlete. He gained a reputation as an aggressive driver who relished the bumps and spinouts of stock-car racing, and he became known as "the Intimidator."

Earnhardt died from injuries suffered during a crash in the final lap of the 2001 Daytona 500. His son Dale, Jr., also raced in the NASCAR Winston Cup series.

Earp, Wyatt (Berry Stapp) (b. March 19, 1848, Monmouth, Ill., U.S.—d. Jan. 13, 1929, Los Angeles, Calif.), legendary frontiersman of the American West, who was an itinerant saloonkeeper, gambler, lawman, gunslinger, and confidence man. The first major biography, Stuart N. Lake's *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal* (1931), written with Earp's collaboration, established the rather fictionalized portrait of a fearless lawman.

Earp and his four brothers—James C. (1841–1926), Virgil W. (1843–1906), Morgan (1851–82), and Warren B. (1855–1900)—spent their early lives in Illinois and Iowa but, toward the end of the American Civil War (1864), moved with their parents to San Bernardino, Calif. In 1868 the family moved back to Illinois, Wyatt and Virgil working on a Union Pacific Railroad crew on the way home. After the Earps moved to Lamar, Mo., Wyatt married in 1870 and was elected local constable, but upon his wife's death of typhoid, he took off, drifting from Indian Territory to various towns in Kansas. He worked as a police officer in Wichita (1875–76) and Dodge City (1876–77), went off to the gold rush in the Black Hills (1877–78), and returned to Dodge City as assistant marshal (1878–79), where he became noted as both lawman and gambler and where he befriended such gunmen as Doc Holliday and Bat Masterson.

Leaving Dodge City with his second wife, he went to New Mexico and then California, working for a time as a Wells Fargo guard, and ended up in 1878 in Tombstone, Ariz. Most of the Earp family had congregated there, buying real estate and businesses; Wyatt became a gambler and guard in the Oriental Saloon, and his brother Virgil became town marshal.

By 1881 a feud had developed between the Earps and a gang led by Ike Clanton. The feud was resolved in the celebrated gunfight at the O.K. Corral (Oct. 26, 1881), pitting the Clanton gang against three Earp brothers (Virgil, Wyatt, and Morgan) and Doc Holliday. Three of the Clanton gang were killed, but Ike and another member escaped. The townspeople then discharged Virgil Earp, on suspicion that the gunning was murder rather than crime fighting.

In March 1882 Morgan Earp was killed by unknown assassins, and Wyatt, his brother Warren, and some friends subsequently killed at least two suspects. Wyatt was accused of murder, and he fled, moving first to Colorado, then to several boomtowns in the West, and eventually to California. He settled there, where he supported himself variously by police work, gambling, mining, and real-estate deals.

earphone, small loudspeaker held or worn close to the listener's ear or within the outer ear. Common forms include the hand-held telephone receiver; the headphone (*q.v.*), in which one or two earphones are held in place by a band worn over the head; and the plug earphone, which is inserted in the outer opening of the ear. The conversion of electrical to acoustical signals is effected by any of the devices used in larger loudspeakers; the highest fidelity is provided by the so-called dynamic earphone, which ordinarily is made part of a headphone and equipped with a cushion to isolate the ears from other sound sources.

earplug, type of ear ornament usually inserted in pierced and distended earlobes. Earplugs were the direct forerunners of today's pierced earrings.

Whale's-tooth earplugs from Polynesia, 19th century; in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

By courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, the Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection of Primitive Art, bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979

The Ainu of northern Japan have used plugs of fabric; in the New World, Mayan earplugs have been found made of thin jade, stone, bone, shell, wood, and metal in many sizes. The Berawan people of Borneo used plugs 3.75 inches (9.5 cm) in diameter, and the Masai of East Africa have a stone earplug that is 4.5 inches (11.4 cm) in diameter and weighs 2 pounds 14 ounces (1.3 kg).

earring, a personal ornament worn pendent from the ear, usually suspended by means of a ring or hook passing through a pierced hole in the lobe of the ear or sometimes by means of a screwed clip on the lobe. In general, earrings are worn in pairs, but a single earring has sometimes been worn. (The single earring was especially popular in Europe during the Renaissance and Baroque period.) In the late 20th century, multiple earrings per ear became popular.

In the Orient, earrings historically were worn by both sexes; in the West (including ancient Israel and Egypt), as a general rule, they were considered to be exclusively female ornaments. Among the Greeks and Romans earrings were worn only by women, and the practice of men wearing them often is spoken of in classical literature as a distinctly Oriental (*i.e.*, Middle Eastern) trait.

In the tombs of the Greek settlers on the Crimean Peninsula (4th century BC), earrings of marvelous complexity and beauty were found. Jewels of the same class, of exquisite beauty and workmanship, were found in the sepulchres of ancient Etruria. Earrings of comparatively simple forms, but set with pearls and other stones, were the mode in Rome.

In Europe, earrings tended to go out of fashion when the wig, coiffure, or headdress obscured the ears, as in the late 17th and 18th centuries. Use of these ornaments continued to be unfashionable in Europe and the Americas during the 19th century but were revived again in the 20th. Simplified methods of piercing the ears led to the renewed popularity of pierced earrings, sometimes worn along the margin of the ear as well as the lobe.

Earth, the third planet in distance outward from the Sun. Its single most outstanding feature is that its near-surface environments are the only places in the universe known to harbour life.

A brief treatment of Earth follows. For full treatment, *see* the MACROPAEDIA, which considers the various aspects of the subject in several different articles. For the relationship of Earth to other components of the solar system, *see* Solar System. For detailed coverage of the shape, structure, and composition of Earth, as well as of its gravitational and magnetic fields, *see* Earth. For specific information about surface features and the factors governing their formation, *see* Continental Landforms; Geomorphic Processes; Oceans; Plate Tectonics. For a description of the layers of air and water that envelop Earth, *see* Atmosphere; Hydrosphere. For a discussion of the so-called zone of life at Earth's surface, *see* Biosphere.

Basic planetary data. The mean distance of Earth from the Sun is about 149,600,000 km (92,960,000 miles). The planet orbits the Sun at a speed of 29.8 km (18.5 miles) per second, making one complete revolution in 365.256 days. As it revolves around the Sun, Earth spins on its axis and rotates completely once every 23 hours 56 minutes 4 seconds.

The fifth largest planet of the solar system, Earth has an equatorial circumference of 40,076 km (24,902 miles), an equatorial radius of 6,378 km (3,963 miles), a polar radius of 6,357 km (3,950 miles), and a mean radius of 6,371 km (3,959 miles). The planet's total surface area is roughly 509,600,000 square km (196,800,000 square miles), of which about 29 percent, or 148,000,000 square km (57,000,000 square miles), is land. The balance of the surface is covered by the oceans and smaller seas. Earth has a mass of 5.976×10^{24} kg (or roughly 6×10^{21} metric tons) and a mean density of 5.52 grams per cubic cm.

Earth has a single natural satellite, the Moon (*q.v.*). The latter orbits the planet at a mean distance of slightly more than 384,400 km (238,900 miles).

Earth's figure and gravity. The centrifugal force of Earth's rotation makes the planet bulge at the Equator. Because of this, Earth has the shape of an oblate spheroid, being flatter near the poles than near the Equator. Correspondingly, one degree of latitude is longer in high latitudes than it is in low ones.

The gravitational field, or gravity, of Earth is manifested as the force acting upon a free, unsupported body causing it to move in the general direction of the centre of the planet. Departures from the spherical shape and the effect of Earth's rotation cause gravity to vary with latitude. The mean gravitational acceleration at sea level is about 980 cm (32.2 feet) per second per second.

Atmosphere and radiation belts. Earth's atmosphere consists of a mixture of gases, chiefly nitrogen (78 percent) and oxygen (21 percent). Argon makes up much of the remainder, with traces of water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, and various other gases also present. At lower altitudes, minute dust particles and water droplets occur in suspension.

Earth is surrounded by a magnetosphere, a region of strong magnetic forces that extends upward from about 140 km (90 miles) in the upper atmosphere. In the magnetosphere, the

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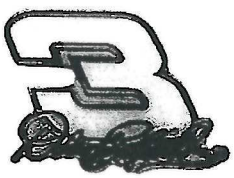

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Pittsburgh, PA
Sunday
June 29, 2014

Earnhardt collectibles sell fast

Tuesday, February 20, 2001

From wire and local dispatches

Dale Earnhardt souvenirs and collectibles sold briskly yesterday, the day after the NASCAR legend was killed in a crash at the Daytona 500.

"There's almost nothing left," Scott Wilson, owner of the Racing Fan store in Monroeville, said little more than four hours after opening. Wilson also owns the Racing Fan store in Northway Mall, where an employee reported a similar run on Earnhardt merchandise.

Ray Goodish, an employee of Monroeville Racing Fan, said customers were waiting outside when he arrived at work at 9 a.m. and 15 to 20 were lined up when he opened the doors at 10 a.m. Wilson estimated there were 50 to 60 customers in the store during most of the morning and early afternoon.

He estimated that he had done a thousand times more business than a usual Monday.

"The Monday after Daytona is always a good day, but not like this," he said.

Wilson noted that Earnhardt has been the most popular among his customers for years -- "He's my No. 1."

Wilson was trying to contact his suppliers yesterday to order more Earnhardt merchandise, but he was having difficulty getting through by telephone and e-mail.

"Everybody's swamped."

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WTDR Thunder 92-7 added 4 new photos.
December 12, 2013 ·

Dale Earnhardt collectibles courtesy of Bill Williams (thank you!)

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Motor Sports

02/20/2001 - Updated 02:07 AM ET

Prices rise for Earnhardt collectibles

By Michael Hiestand, USA TODAY

The law of supply and demand doesn't go into mourning.

Related items

- Earnhardt index

As soon as driver Dale Earnhardt's death in Sunday's Daytona 500 was announced, the market for his memorabilia heated up — and kept shooting up Monday.

That's logical, since a late great won't sign another autograph or pose for another picture. And the Internet has intensified the process, since memorabilia can go online to create instant markets. Kevin Isaacson, publisher of *Sports Collectors Digest,* says that online markets mean "the spikes can be much more immediate, causing dramatically higher prices and more (item) listings."

Monday, online auction sites such as eBay and Yahoo included long lists of Earnhardt memorabilia. Those items, generally posted Sunday night and scheduled to accept bids for the next several days, included baseballs, tires, magazines, posters, cereal boxes and fan snapshots that Earnhardt had posed for or signed. A toy car that he had autographed had gone from $50 to $305 by Monday afternoon, and an autographed driving glove was at $1,125.

Bryan Miller of Pro Sports Memorabilia.com says that his firm sold out its supply of Earnhardt photos Sunday. "Unfortunately, as soon as something like this happens," he says, " items can sell out instantly."

NASCAR.com didn't accept orders on Earnhardt items Monday, but dealers everywhere reported big sales. Bill Rodman of B&J Collectibles, a wholesaler and retailer in Lakewood, N.J., had been selling only two Earnhardt "mini-replica helmets" per month — but had 173 orders Monday morning. Says Rodman, "They're flying out of here."

Kendall Loyd, owner of Orlando Sportscards, found the consumer response to Earnhardt collectibles "stunning." NASCAR, he says, "is huge now. I saw prices of his stuff escalate hours after he died — cards are selling at five times what they were Sunday."

But speculators shouldn't assume price hikes will be long-lived. Isaacson suggests that, ultimately, memorabilia value is based on scarcity. And NASCAR drivers have generally given lots of autographs to fans at tracks — and Earnhardt was known for aggressively marketing products bearing his likeness. Eventually, says Isaacson, prices might head back down : "In the old days before online, that took six months. Now it might take just two weeks."

But some buyers Monday weren't worried about price. Most stores in Asheville, N.C., sold all their Earnhardt products within an hour after the news of his death. Many buyers said they were looking for remembrances, not profit.

"I've been pulling for him ever since he started," says Ronald Crawford, who hit the stores with his son Ronald Jr. as soon as he heard about the death. "If they had $1,000 worth of this stuff, I would have bought $1,000 worth of it. And I'm not planning to sell any of it. He was my man."

Contributing: Gary Graves, Jon Ostendorff

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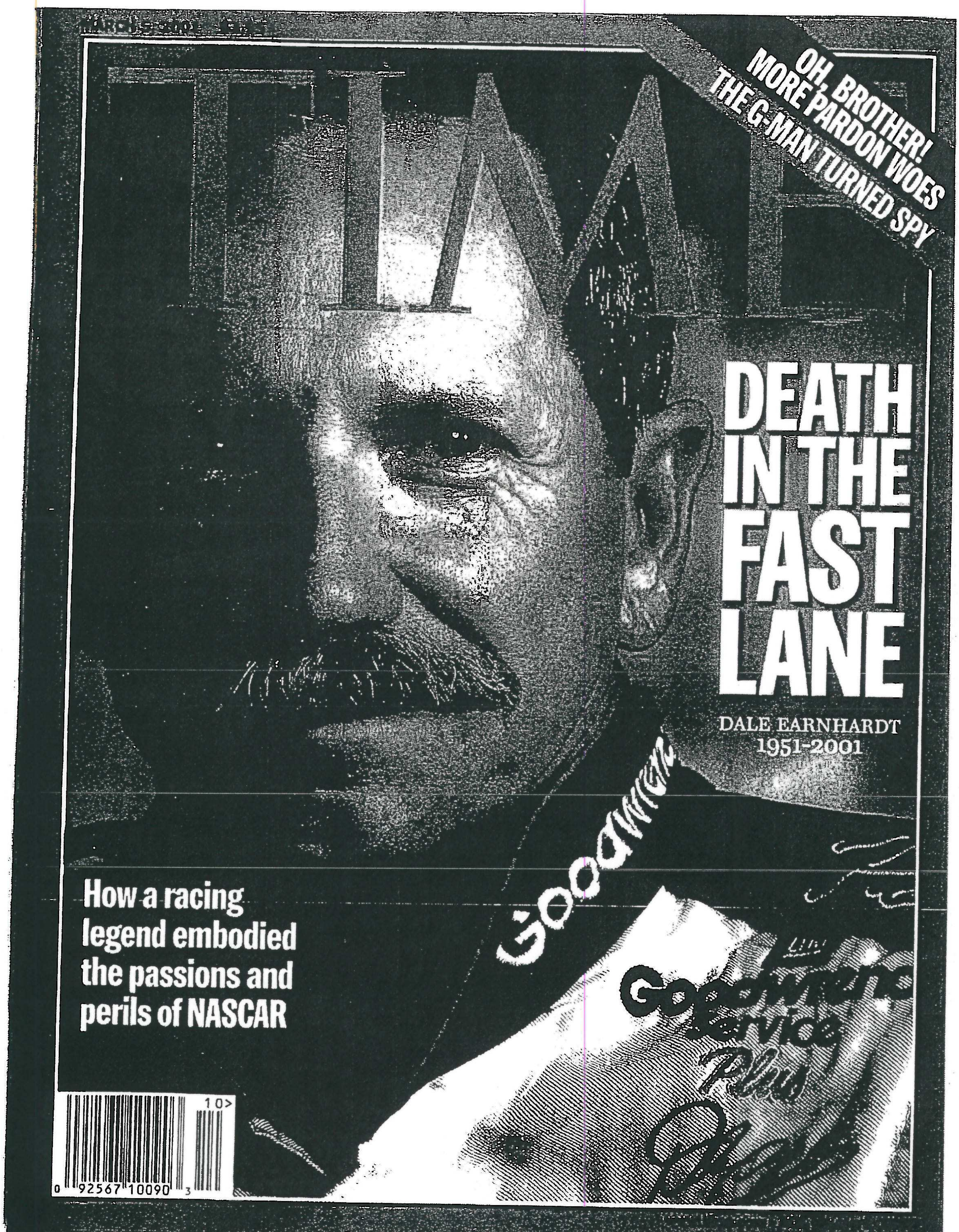
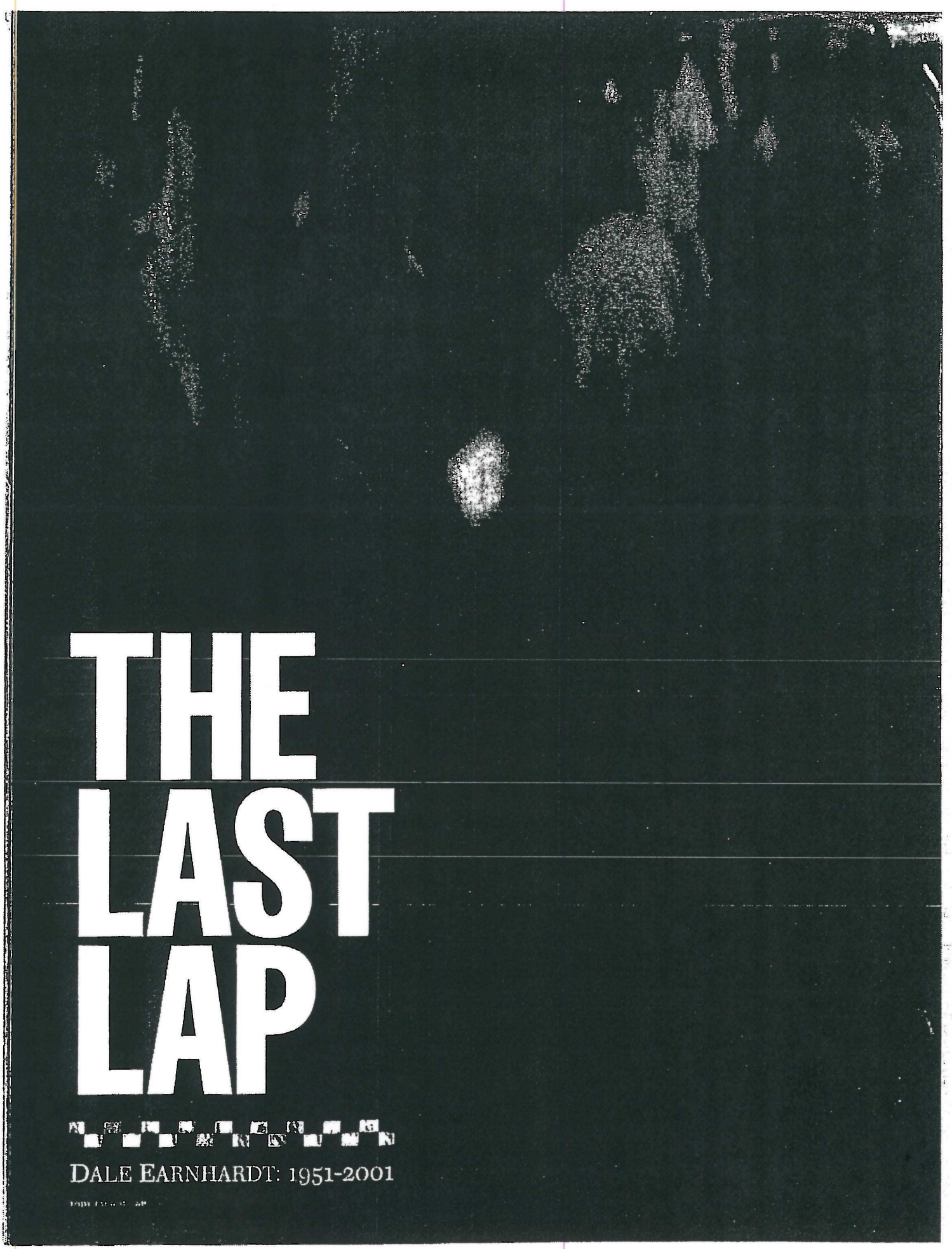
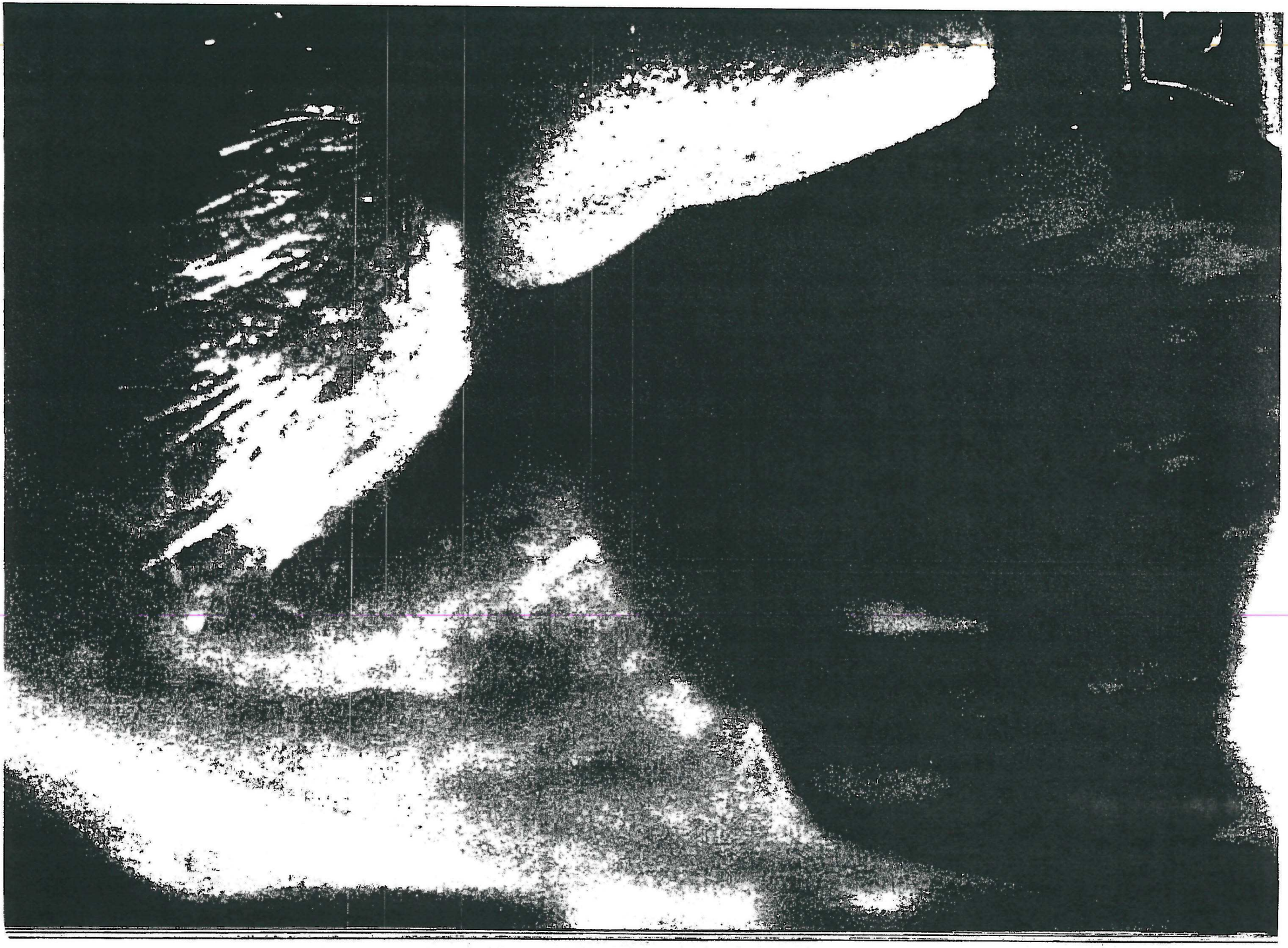
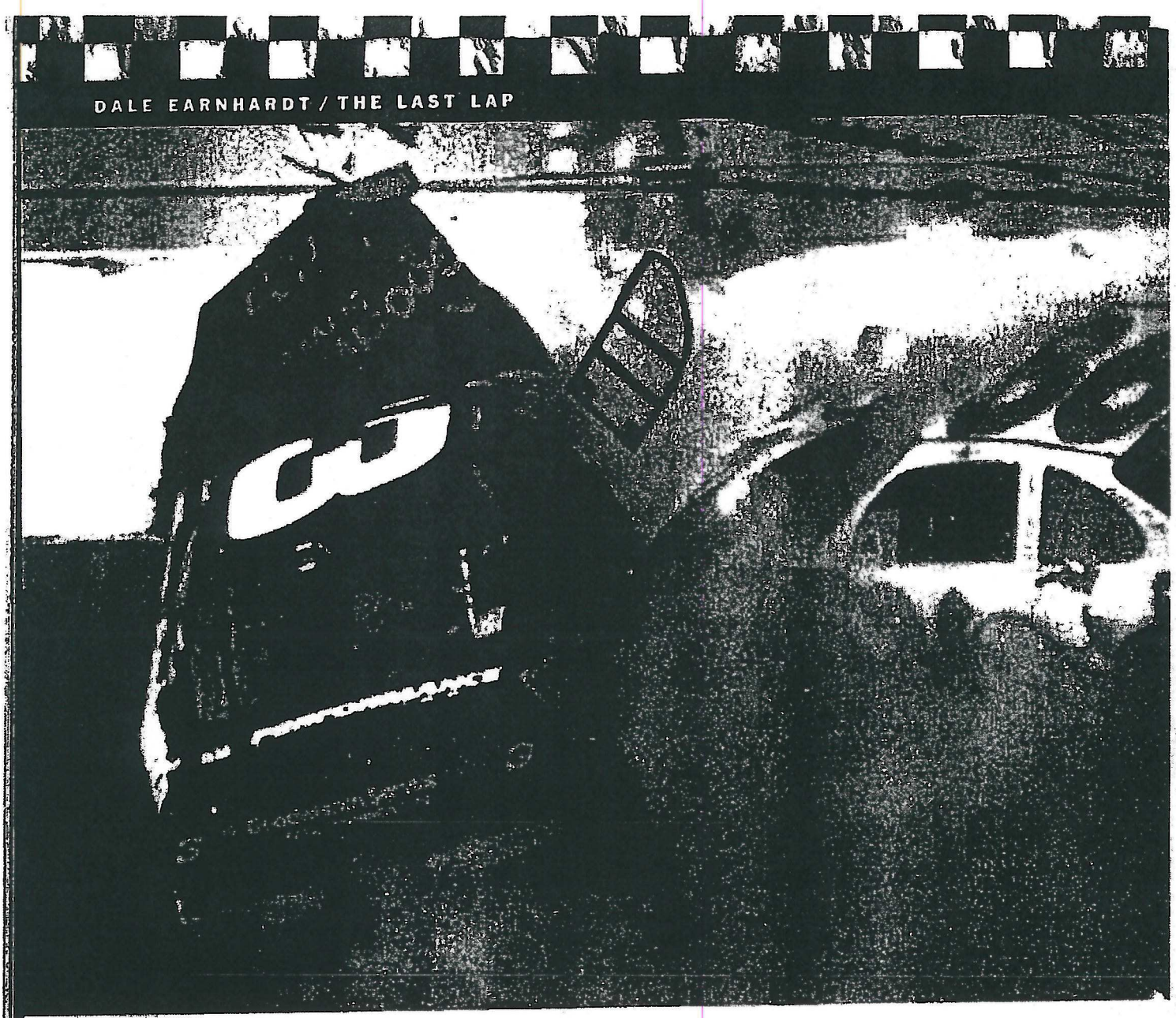

TIME
OH, BROTHER!
MORE PARDON WOES
THE G-MAN TURNED SPY
DEATH IN THE FAST LANE
DALE EARNHARDT
1951-2001
How a racing legend embodied the passions and perils of NASCAR



THE LAST LAP

DALE EARNHARDT: 1951-2001





GREG SUVINO—AP

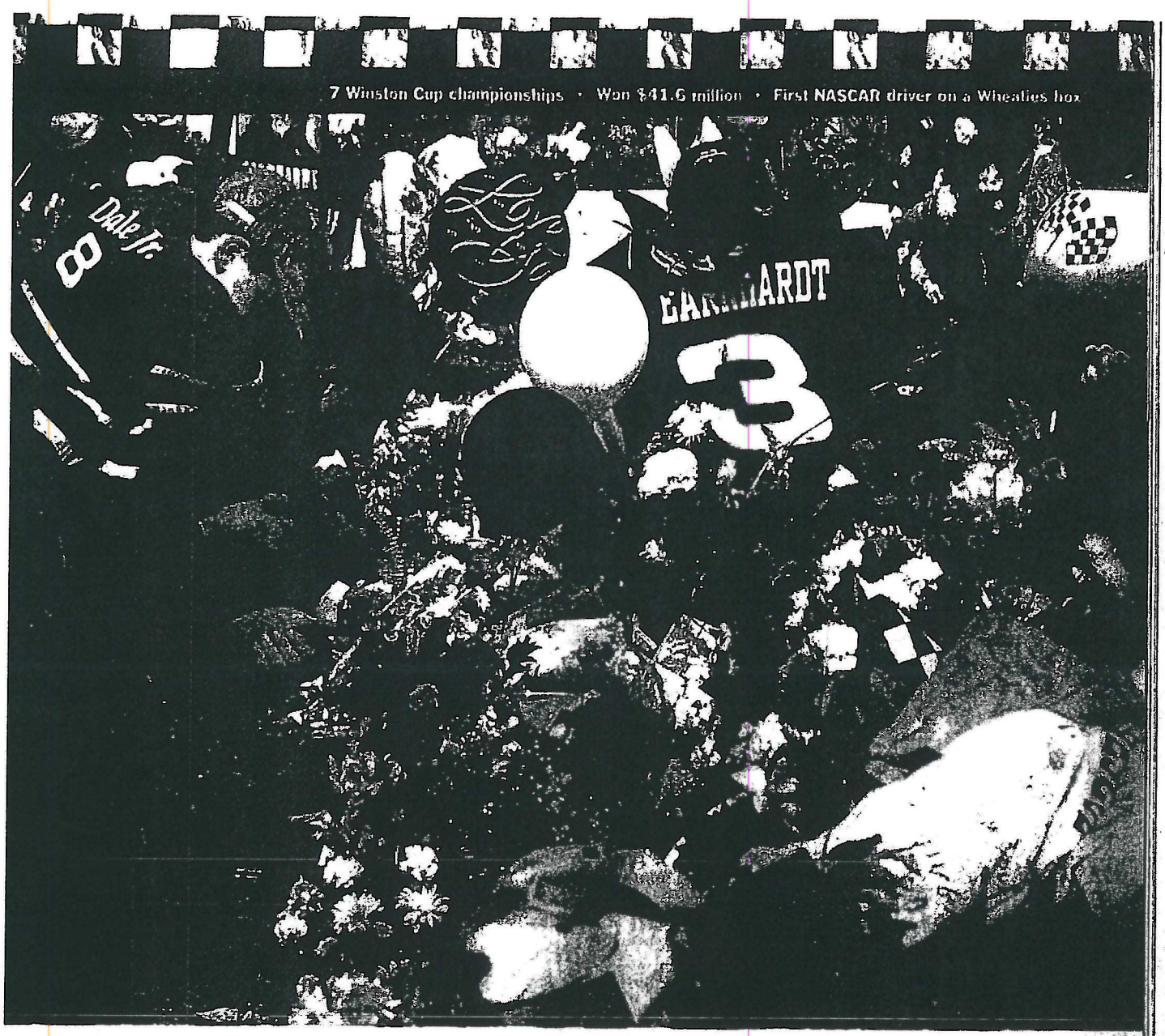
By ROBERT SULLIVAN

FOR DALE EARNHARDT, THE RACE WAS NEVER OVER. BACK WHEN he was winning everything in sight—11 races one year, nine in another—he would come home some nights mad as hell about something that somebody had done to him on the track. Squeezed him, bumped him, as if he would never do such things himself. And this was after a victory.

Earnhardt had been a wild-child teenager, as reckless as they come and headed for nowhere, but he grew up to be his sport's father figure, Dad without the breaks, and a corporate titan to boot. He could regale a crowd of GM dealers with war stories for an hour—Mr. Charm—then shift gears in a heartbeat, chiding drivers who wanted to slow the cars down as "candy asses." He made tens of millions of dollars racing and tens of millions more running Dale Earnhardt Inc., but even at 49, a man of considerable responsibilities and with nothing left to prove, he would never take his foot off the gas. That is why they loved him.

Ironhead, the Intimidator, Earnhardt: he had massive, irresistible appeal. He brought fans into the sport who wouldn't know NASCAR from NASA. He was the rebel soul of a sport that had gone corporate. What roiled inside him usually came out, sometimes in fits of temper or unruly behavior behind the wheel. Whenever a race started, you wondered what Dale Earnhardt might do today.

At Daytona Beach, Fla., a Sunday ago, it was an Earnhardt kind of day: contradictions everywhere. It was going to be a triumphal afternoon, with a huge network audience watching, the ultimate proof, as if anyone needed it, that NASCAR was nationwide. Yet the sissies had won too, and rules



were in place to slow the cars, but the changes seemed to be making the racing more dangerous. An earlier crash looked like an Armageddon of a wreck: 19 cars careering around, smashing into one another, Tony Stewart's Pontiac soaring through the air, ripping the hood off another car, metal clanging, a 16-minute red flag to clean up the mess—and only a bum shoulder, Stewart's, as a result. Then on the last turn of the last lap, Earnhardt's famous black No. 3 Chevy Monte Carlo plowed—*thud*—into the wall and drifted back out, nose smashed. No fire, no catapulting frames. Ironhead had walked away from stuff that looked a lot worse than this. "No one ever expected Dale Earnhardt to die in a race car," said Max Helton, a NASCAR chaplain.

NASCAR racers drive stock cars, simultaneously primitive and ultrasophisticated versions of the Fords, Chevies, Pontiacs and Dodges in America's driveways. These cars have engine blocks of 1960s vintage; neither you nor I have bought a car with a carburetor for 15 years, but Earnhardt drove one at Daytona. Certainly his Monte Carlo was a modified machine: its engine had been juiced to about 720 h.p.; its sheet-metal skin was lighter than a road-ready car's; its roll bars were designed to render the cab a fast-moving cage.

Outwardly, though, a NASCAR car looks like any old car wearing a sweater of decals, and in NASCAR racing there is little psychic distance between the superstar and the fan in the stands. The popular image of the European Grand Prix circuit, with its dukes and duchesses and ascot-wearing playboy drivers, is as foreign to NASCAR as Bordeaux is to Bud. NASCAR in America is religion, replete with charismatic figures, creeds and commandments about how life should be lived.

It didn't start out as such a holy thing. Early on, stock-car-racing events ranged from illegal to highly illegal, emerging from races between law officers and moonshine runners. It wasn't until a racer named Bill France started the National championship circuit in 1946—which incorporated as the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing in 1948—that jalopy races began to look like something resembling a league, an organization, a sport.

It was roughshod and regional, but France negotiated the bumpy road efficiently, and then in the late 1950s, Detroit moved south and everything changed. Much of America thinks stock-car racing broke through about five years ago, when the Kid—

Jeff Gordon, he of the Tom Cruise looks and the middle-class Indiana upbringing—started winning everything in sight and turning up on the *Today* show to hobnob with Katie and Matt. But consider this: by 1965, NASCAR was already the second most popular sport, by attendance, in the country. And it hadn't started its Northern offensive.

That would be mounted gradually. To an itinerary of Spartanburg, S.C.; Birmingham and Talladega, Ala.; and Hickory and Asheville, N.C.; NASCAR added, over time, Long Pond, Pa.; Sonoma, Calif.; Joliet, Ill.; Brooklyn, Mich.; Dover, Del.; and Loudon, N.H. The fans were attracted, in this mature iteration of NASCAR, by the thunder of the cars, which have been able to reach 190 m.p.h. for 40 years now, and also by a host of stars every bit as human and accessible as some of the early characters, if better scrubbed. Richard Petty won 200 races. David Pearson beat Petty head to head 33 times to 30. Bobby Allison won 84 times in 25 years. Cale Yarborough won 83 times and was an entertaining throwback, a broad-bellied, bullheaded racer, maybe the biggest s.o.b. on the track this side of...

Dale Earnhardt.

It was Petty and Earnhardt, each of whom won the season-long Winston Cup title a record seven times, who had the largest legions of fans. King Richard's subjects loved his laconic aw-shucks manner and the way it contrasted with his ferocity behind the wheel. Ironhead's followers reveled in their hero's orneriness.

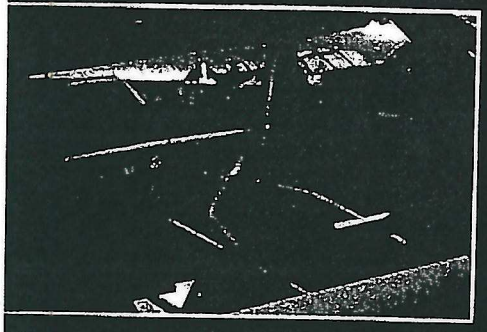
INSIDE THE RACE CAR

Only NASCAR driver to win Rookie of the Year and the driving championship in consecutive years

Jeff Lancaster, owner of Lancaster's BBQ, a restaurant and car-racing shrine in Mooresville, N.C., explained it last week, the walls around him covered with souvenirs of racing giants: "He was the John Wayne of NASCAR. He was a kick-ass, take-names kinda guy. A guy's guy. Somebody that made things happen."

He was his father's son. Born in Kannapolis, N.C., in 1951, he didn't take naturally to school—he would drop out in the ninth grade—but loved being around cars. Ralph Earnhardt, known as Ironheart, was a short-track racing god and taught his son to wrangle a stock car. Dale married at 17, and he and his first wife had a son, Kerry. By the time he began his pro racing career at age 24 in 1975, Earnhardt had a young family to support and, more than most other drivers, was all business and no fooling. When strapped for cash, he would borrow from fellow racers, banking that he would win enough in Sunday's race for payback on Monday. That's pressure, and it made Earnhardt bear down.

Sometimes too hard. In one early-career incident, he tapped and spun the car of dirt-track driver Stick Elliot. The word went out that Stick's mechanic had a gun and was looking for Ironhead. The grease monkey didn't find him, and the racer who would soon be known by a second sobriquet, the Intimidator, drove off to greater glory. Earnhardt was NASCAR's rookie of the year in 1979 and won the season-long title in 1980. Even critics of his aggressive tactics acknowledged that in



HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT . . .

HEAT Interior car peratures can rise to F. Heat dissipation eases with body fat. rivers need to be fit

HEART RATE Pulse is at 85% of maximum, similar to marathon running. Drivers can lose more than 5 lbs. a race

GUE No time-outs. No h. And no room for n fades" when the th of a football field es in a second

FORCE A helmet weighs around 3 lbs. But on a banked turn, pulling between 2.5Gs and 5Gs, it can be five times as heavy

IN THE HOT SEAT

ers are bundled fire-resistant suits, s and gloves re racing. Other ty measures being idered:

S DEVICE
ilder yoke attaches elmet and stops snapping back forth. More than drivers placed rders the day after Earnhardt's death

SEAT Teams are working on stronger, capsule-like seats that prevent drivers from being thrown around in a crash

HARNESS
For some reason Earnhardt's left lap belt failed. A new design will reduce the force on the shoulders and neck.

Current: **5-point** harness

New: **6-point** harness

Graphic by Ed Good
Reported by Amanda Beaver

By RICHARD CORLISS

What does it feel like to earn a living making left turns in heavy traffic at dangerously high speeds? Just ask Derrike Cope, 42, who won the Daytona 500 in 1990 and now calls races for the Fox Sports Network: "There is nothing like sitting in a projectile going 190 m.p.h. on the brink of going out of control. It's the sheer rush, touching every emotion you have." And a potentially lethal rush: three other NASCAR drivers died in the year leading up to Dale Earnhardt's crash.

On race day you rise around 7, pack your gear, attend a sponsor hospitality event. Sponsors call the shots: their money determines the quality of your team and your equipment. Before the race you say something blandly reassuring to your wife—"Hey, I'll see you in a while"—then get into your car. Your team mummifies you with five tight belts. You feel the throttle under your thin-soled shoe. For the first time today, you're alone. You hear silence, then a rapid thumping: "It's your heart beating inside your ears when the earphones are plugged into the radio," says Cope. Two voices will guide you: your crew chief and your spotter, high above the track. "He is my eyes and ears. He tells me what is going on: if I am clear to move, what openings exist. He gives me choices."

Then the motors start, and "you are into what you instinctively do." You follow the pace car, reach the green flag and rev to 190 m.p.h. there's no speedometer, you don't need one. "You are sitting right on top of the exhaust. There are vibrations all through your rear end, up through your hands." The race is on.

There are other folks on the track with the same goal you have. You view them from a unique perspective. "You spend a lot more time looking in the rearview mirror than out of the front of your car," Cope says.

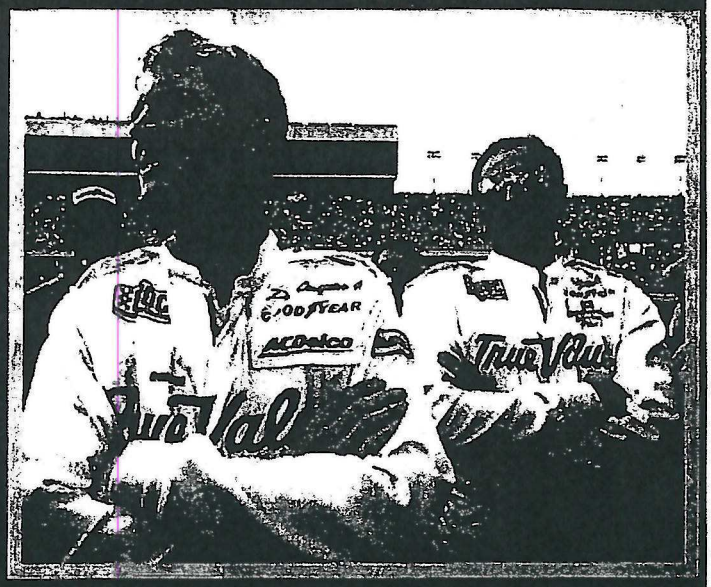
Strategy, both competitive and financial, demands that you be near the front of the pack. Your sponsor equates TV time with money. "Exposure is what it's all about. You have to create an opportunity where you can go up front." The smart spot during the race is second place, behind someone like Earnhardt. You fly faster in the leader's wake. Then there's the TV time being up front near a star. And, well, you just might beat him.

At the pit stop—about every 50 laps—a 16-man pit crew gasses you up, changes your tires, wipes the windshield. You swig some water; you'll lose 3 lbs. to 11 lbs. during a race. Your belts get looser, so tighten them up. "You don't want to move in the seat, you only want to steer the race car. You're just along for the ride."

Every sense is heightened. "You hear the motor, gear, transmission. You can tell when a tire is rubbing a fender—you will *smell* the change." You have a piano tuner's sense for the harmonics of your motor. It might change pitches because a valve spring is breaking. "When something changes, you understand," says Cope. You will know when a car is near. "There are times you can't see it, but you can hear it, or hear the air on your car." Your skin is a tool too. "You get a sense of buffeting. You can feel the air on the car and get a sense of when to find a pocket of air." You dive into that pocket.

In such extreme conditions, a car can behave unpredictably. It becomes "loose" or "gets sideways," the nose or tail swerving of its own accord. Tame it, or there's trouble. When the metal merges and some cars crash, you look for the exit. "All you are looking for is an opening. You don't have time to think. Smoke. There is just smoke. You are looking for a window, maybe just a shadow. Sometimes all you will see is the front of your hood. It's very unnerving."

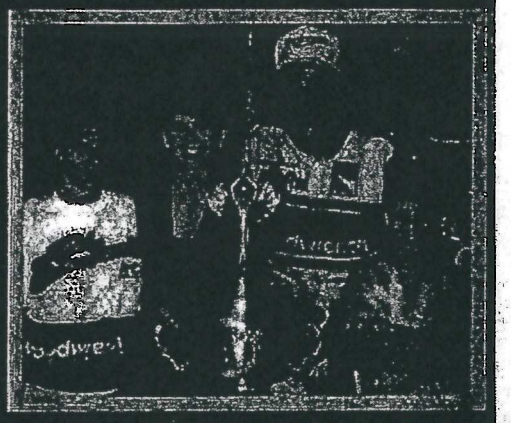
In the last few laps, the spotter and crew chief are guiding you. "When you get down to that 10 to 20 laps, you are on 'kill.' It's a go-for-broke attitude. The last five to 10 laps, it is all you can do to handle. You are driving the car on the ragged edge of disaster." *Reported by Jeanne DeQuine*



JUNIOR
▲ His dad seemed to mellow—a bit—after Dale Jr. joined the racing circuit

THROWBACK
◀ Earnhardt's roots and furious driving style linked him with NASCAR's wilder early days

FAMILY WIN
▶ With children Kelley and Dale Jr. and his third wife Teresa in 1988



Earnhardt, NASCAR had as talented a driver as it had ever seen.

He married a second time, and then a third; his family grew to include Kelley and Dale Jr., with second wife Brenda; and Taylor Nicole, with Teresa, his widow. He got into the business of racing, using the money from his on-track success, which would eventually burgeon to an all-time record $41.6 million, to start Dale Earnhardt Inc., an auto-racing company that would grow to employ 200 in Mooresville and field three cars on NASCAR's Winston Cup circuit.

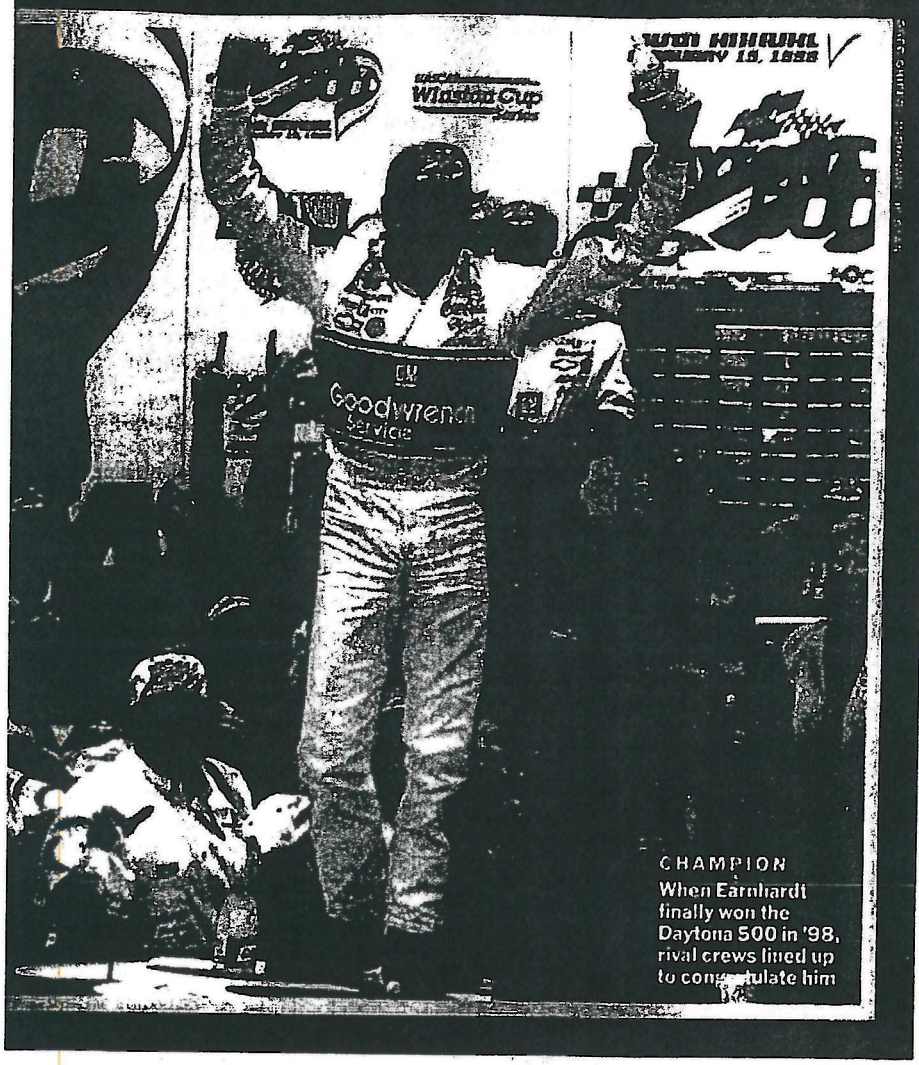
But as Earnhardt thrived, two elements of his driving career—his readiness to mix it up and his regular place at the center of crashes—continued to make him controversial. His great rival of the 1980s, Darrell Waltrip, once spoke for the field when he said, "You ought to get 10 bonus points for taking Earnhardt out of a race." Neil Bonnett, Earnhardt's best friend at the time, said, "If I can ever catch him, I'm gonna knock the s___ out of him." Bonnett, it is eerie to note, died in 1994 after crashing his Chevrolet into the wall at Daytona's Turn 4.

As Earnhardt's legend grew, so did NASCAR's popularity, and in recent years both took on a nuanced appearance. Earnhardt settled down with Teresa, and by all accounts settled down a bit on the oval too. He came to be seen as a grand, grizzled gentleman of the game, the kind of athlete you take your kid to see, so that a decade from now the kid can say he once saw Dale Earnhardt drive. Another change: Dale Jr. joined him on the circuit. "These past two years, having Junior on the track, we've all seen a marked change in Dale," said David Allen, his longtime p.r. manager.

For all its immensity and newfound wealth, NASCAR is in some regards still a traveling Southern tent show, a caravan of families who just happen to go very fast. It is nothing if not dynastic: Bill France handing the reins of his empire to Bill France Jr. Lee Petty handing the wheel to his son Richard, who hands it to his boy Kyle, who hands it to his kid Adam—who, tragically, is killed in 2000 at Loudon. Dale Jarrett teaching his son Dale how to drive, as Darrell Waltrip encourages his brother Michael. Bobby Allison teaching Clifford and Davey, then losing both boys, Clifford to a crash and Davey to a helicopter accident. Ralph Earnhardt teaching Dale, who teaches Junior.

The coziness of that community couldn't hide the fact that NASCAR has become a corporate force in spectator sports and television programming, with 13 racing circuits involving stock cars, open-wheel cars and trucks. It is now a well-tuned operation, staging 2,300 races in 42 states each year, the cream being its 36-event Winston Cup series, which, heading into 2001, landed a six-year network-television contract worth

Won 34 races at Daytona's speedway, a record, but only one Daytona 500

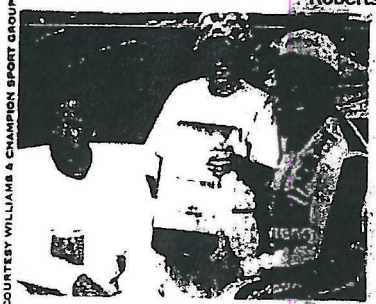


CHAMPION
When Earnhardt finally won the Daytona 500 in '98, rival crews lined up to congratulate him

about $400 million annually. The NASCAR organization is still owned by the France family; its public corporation, International Speedway Corp., owns or operates 11 tracks coast to coast, with new venues in Chicago and Kansas City, Kans. Last year ISC had revenues of $440 million, up 47% from 1999.

In the past five years, NASCAR has been electric, and its reach has been growing. Its sponsors, which include wholesome chocolates and colas as well as cars and cigarettes, have been delirious. This year, for instance, UPS dropped its Olympic sponsorship and added NASCAR. Keep in mind that UPS sells its delivery services mostly to other businesses, an upmarket audience. If outsiders wanted to continue in ignorance of NASCAR because of class snobbery, who cared? Not UPS.

Success is not without its risks, though, and drivers perceived that the level of danger on the track was rising as NASCAR and its sponsors pursued maximum entertainment value. This year marked the return of DaimlerChrysler's Dodge division to stock-car racing. Chrysler, despite deep corporate troubles, had committed north of $60 million to the effort, and it was out for glory. "Dodge's appearance certainly did increase the level of competition," says Kevin Kennedy, a spokesman for Ford's racing division. "There was [Dodge] red everywhere you went in Daytona."



COURTESY WILLIAMS & CHAMPION SPORT GROUP

So they had the new cars and a brand-new $2.4 billion network TV contract, and

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

No. 3 and Me

Millions of Americans, mostly in the red states, if you recall your election charts, lost a hero the instant the black car veered violently into the wall. Every major newspaper south of the Mason-Dixon Line rushed to put out a special section, while millions living north of that line wondered what the big deal was.

Dale Earnhardt left school in the ninth grade and entered his first race, legend has it, for grocery money. At the time of his death, his income had reached nearly $27 million a year. Mostly the money came from sales of merchandise: hats, jackets and the No. 3 logo sticker on the back of my family car that occasionally earns me a knowing honk and a wave from a like-minded fan, even during my blue-state commute to New York City.

Dale was a friend of mine. He visited my office, and I visited his. He even flew with my family to tracks throughout the South to watch him drive a car. We talked about our daughters, both the same age. His little girl hunts rabbits; mine plays hockey. The flowers and personal notes that piled up last week outside his headquarters briefly threatened to make him America's Diana with a push-broom mustache. News chiefs in their New York City offices were more than a little mystified by the clips of mourners weeping as if they'd lost their best friend. They had.

I've driven a Winston Cup stock car. They're unhinged monsters, all engine and frame and harnesses that were meant to prevent what happened to Dale. He once told me he hated how confining the modern car is; he liked the old days, his right arm slung over the backseat, steering with his left. And he hung onto as much of the past as he could, including the antique open-faced helmet that might have contributed to his death. But those who suggested the new style were subject to a stare that could pierce his mirrored sunglasses; real drivers—the rebels, the cowboys, the guys he looked up to, with names like Fireball Roberts and Tiny Lund—had a certain look.

Two years ago, my son asked Dale for permission merely to touch the fabled black machine before the start of a race at Talladega in Alabama. Dale loved the idea for the good luck it might bring him and insisted only that I bring my son to Victory Lane if he won. Cut to Dale holding the kid aloft, my son holding the trophy aloft—the whole giddy, heady scene captured in the photos I'm now left with.

Last week my son kept asking, "Is there *any* chance he'll just wake up and everything will be O.K.?" That's probably my fault. I may have told him once or twice that Dale Earnhardt would never die. ■

Williams is an NBC News anchor

INSIDE NASCAR'S GROWING WORLD

THE FANS

Attendance has doubled since 1990. Last year 6.5 million fans flocked to Winston Cup races, spending around $65 a ticket. A NASCAR survey of fans found that:

- **40%** are women
- **64%** have attended college or beyond
- **70%** have Internet access
- **41%** earn more than $50,000
- **38%** live in the South
- **17%** in the Northeast
- **45%** in rest of country
- Devote an average of **3.7** hours a week to the sport
- Spend an average of **$287** per year on NASCAR merchandise

Source: Edgar, Dunn & Co.

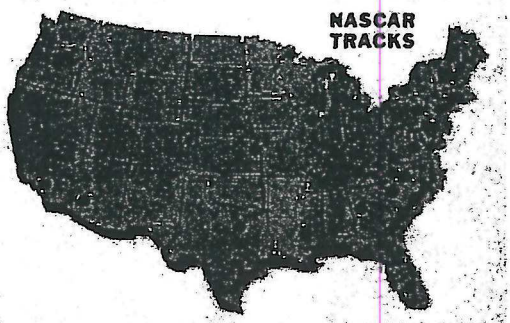
THE SPORT

Projected to be the fastest-growing sports earner over the next five years

TOTAL REVENUE (millions)

Sport	1999	2006	Growth*
NFL	4,119	6,524	7%
MLB	2,633	4,030	7%
NBA	2,656	3,838	5%
NASCAR	**1,398**	**3,423**	**14%**
NHL	1,528	2,129	5%

Source: Paul Kagan Associates Inc. *Compound annual



NETWORK-TV RATINGS*

NFL regular season	10.9
NASCAR	**5.1**
NBA regular season	3.4
MLB regular season	2.6
NHL regular season	1.4

Data from leagues and networks *Last season

LOCAL ECONOMIC IMPACT (millions)

Top 5 income-generating pro sports events for host cities

Indianapolis 500	$337
Daytona 500	**$240**
Brickyard 400	**$220**
Super Bowl XXXIV	$215
SAP U.S. Grand Prix	$171

Source: Street & Smith's SportsBusiness Journal, based on 2000 figures

THE MERCHANDISE

Licensed sales have increased almost 16-fold since 1990. Products affiliated with Earnhardt and Jeff Gordon reportedly make up 80% of total sales

'90 $80 million

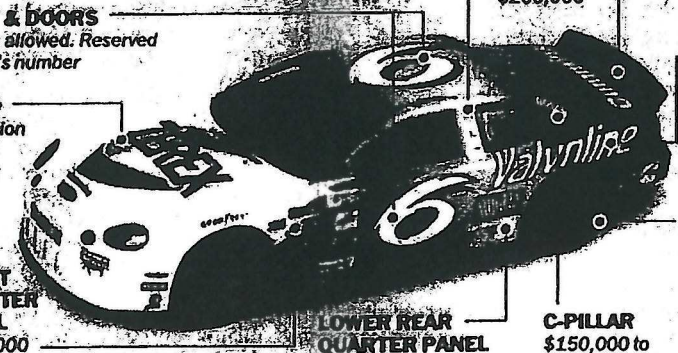
'95 $600 million

'00 $1.26 billion

Figures based on industry estimates

THE SPONSORS

Each racing team attracts corporate sponsors that pay big money for their logos to flash past at 190 m.p.h.



- **ROOF & DOORS** — *No ads allowed. Reserved for car's number*
- **HOOD** — *$7 million to $12 million*
- **FRONT QUARTER PANEL** — *$370,000*
- **B-PILLAR** — *$75,000 to $200,000*
- **TRUNK AND BACK** — *$350,000 to $1.5 million*
- **REAR QUARTER PANELS** — *Often sold as package with hood*
- **TIRES** — *One race can chew up 32 tires. Goodyear is the exclusive supplier at $384 each*
- **LOWER REAR QUARTER PANEL** — *$250,000 to $1 million*
- **C-PILLAR** — *$150,000 to $500,000*

Source: Industry estimates, NASCAR, Goodyear; 1999 model car

MARY ANN CARTER FOR TIME (3)

the last thing NASCAR officials wanted at their showcase event was a repeat of the boring 2000 Daytona, which featured only nine lead changes and a walkaway win by Jarrett. Last autumn they experimented at the circuit's other superspeedway course, Talladega, with ways of slowing down the cars to make for bunched, exciting racing. Some of the drivers had come out of Talladega looking ashen—"A little too exciting at times for me," admitted Gordon—but there had been 49 lead changes and no big wrecks, so it was determined to go with restrictor plates on the carburetors (to reduce horsepower) and aerodynamic spoilers on the cars' surfaces (to increase drag) at Daytona too.

Earnhardt, who won that race at Talladega, had opinions on slowing down cars, as you might imagine. "If you're not a race driver, stay the hell home. Don't come here and grumble about going too fast. Get the hell out of the race car if you've got feathers on your legs or butt," he said a year ago, addressing the chicken-hearted. He had opinions about proposed safety measures too. He wasn't wearing the new Head and Neck Support (HANS) system, which fights whiplash in a crash. But Earnhardt was in favor of so-called soft walls. Countering track officials who said the cushioned barriers would take longer to clean up after a wreck, Earnhardt said earlier this year, "I'd rather they spend 20 minutes cleaning up that mess than cleaning me off the wall."

So with new rules in place, new controversies in the air and TV cameras ready to roll, the gentlemen started their engines. It was, from the first, a terrific, thrilling race. If it was marred by that 19-car melee with 27 laps to go, this was offset by constant jockeying that would eventually produce 40 more lead changes than last year. Earnhardt, for his part, was having a decent day. Some dings to the Monte Carlo changed the car's aerodynamic shape and let him know before the endgame that he wouldn't be the winner. But up ahead, there was a solid chance that someone else from Dale Earnhardt Inc. would be, as Michael Waltrip and Dale Jr. were leading the pack. By talking with his pit crew over the radio, Earnhardt started coaching his teammates. "Those last 10 laps, I saw such a different Dale Earnhardt," said his friend and former crew chief, Larry McReynolds, who was calling the race for Fox from the press box. "I can't imagine how proud he was to look out his windshield to see his son and his good friend up there." Waltrip claimed victory, his first in 463 NASCAR races.

Earnhardt was seconds from the fin-

Drove an unprecedented 22 full seasons on the Winston Cup circuit

BY DARRELL WALTRIP

The Empty Parking Spot Next to Mine

When a driver steps into his car, he knows, but doesn't necessarily believe, that accidents happen. That's true of any athlete entering his arena. He approaches his task confidently, understanding its risks, eyeing its rewards. What may cause awe or fear in others is, for the professional athlete, eased by the mundane ritual that accompanies the job, and an obligatory nod at danger. We all accept that.

There are moments, though, when it takes more than a nod to acknowledge danger. In February 1994, Neil Bonnett died on a practice run a week before the Daytona 500. Neil was a good friend—and Dale's closest. Dale had qualified fourth that year, but I was in the back of the pack. We talked before the race, and Dale spied my wife Stevie slipping me a card with a note written on it. He asked her about it. She told him that for years before every race, she would write out some biblical verse—whichever she found most fitting for that day—and hand it to me for good luck, for protection, for confidence. With the shock of Neil's death heavy on our minds, Dale asked if she would do the same for him. She did.

Dale didn't ask for much else, though. In fact, love him or hate him, as the patriarch of NASCAR racing he was often the one who provided the good luck, protection or confidence. He enjoyed his on-track persona as the Intimidator, and, yes, he liked to push people to their limits—or to the side of the track, if necessary. All the same, he was the standard-bearer for professional drivers. On the day he died, he spoke his last words to the pit crew, telling them to relay advice to his teammates—my brother and his son—who were ahead of him in spots one and two. He must have realized toward the end of the race that his car wasn't capable of winning, so he just kind of sat there and blocked the pack from gaining on Michael and Dale Jr. He played the shepherd, an uncharacteristic role for him.

I knew Dale for 30 years, and saw him grow from an eager but sloppy novice to a consummate success. As his career reached higher and higher plateaus, he became our connection to the past, to the way NASCAR and its drivers used to be. Dale had started out with nothing. In fact, when I met him in 1973, just about the only two things he had in place were his mustache and his ambition. At that time he was racing on dirt tracks in Concord, N.C., looking for a way out or a leg up and often feeling discouraged about his lack of opportunities. His father-in-law at the time, Robert Gee, built race cars, and I happened to turn to him after I wrecked mine at Daytona in 1973. I came to know Dale through Robert.

Once I told Dale that if he'd finish repairing my car for me, I'd let him take it to Nashville to race in a 200 lapper. He was good: he could drive the wheels off anything, but young Dale also had a reckless streak. He did go to Nashville, where he proceeded to wreck not only my car but the rest of the field as well. He nearly got me banned from the track.

That streak, though, hardened over a short number of years into smart, unapologetic professionalism. By 1979 he had won NASCAR's rookie-of-the-year honor, and just a year later captured his first Winston Cup championship. And with every victory he slowly overcame considerable shyness, learning to speak for himself rather than let his car do the talking.

Today I'm sitting here on the infield in Rockingham, N.C., where we park our motor coaches. Dale parks next to me, always has. Now there's just an empty spot over there with a wreath laid over it. I'll always regret that I never got to say goodbye to Dale. In some ways, it took Daytona to make me realize how much he meant to me.

Dale wasn't sure if my wife Stevie was going to make it down to see him before the green flag on Sunday. But, as she had for seven years to the day, she had gone through the Scripture and picked out an appropriate message for Dale to take with him on the road. Since race day was the 18th, she picked the 18th Proverb, and settled on verse 10: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe." Stevie handed him the note. He read it, kissed her on the cheek and headed to his car. ■

Darrell Waltrip, in orange jumpsuit, winner of 84 Winston Cup Series races, is a NASCAR racing analyst for Fox TV

ish line when the first contact was made—with Sterling Marlin's car. It didn't seem a big thing, although Marlin would receive death threats in the week ahead. No. 3 veered right, plowed into the wall and slid back just as Ken Schrader's car broadsided it. The crash was undramatic. Ironhead had survived much worse.

The track hounds knew better. They knew that when a car isn't coming apart, the energy isn't dissipating. The sheet metal in these cars is designed to shred and fly away so that a driver isn't crushed or sliced. Earnhardt's car was still more or less intact. "Talk to us, Dale!" The plea from the pit crackled in the earphones of a driver—a champion, a legend—who was, in all probability, already dead.

It was learned later that Earnhardt's left lap seat belt had torn apart, meaning he may have been thrown into the steering column. No one could ever recall a seat belt failing that way. In the aftermath, NASCAR determined that any new safety rules would not be hurried, and that the next week's race, in Rockingham, N.C., would be held as scheduled.

Incredibly, or possibly not, Dale Jr. announced he would race his Earnhardt Inc. car. And Childress Racing, which had employed the senior Earnhardt, got a replacement driver for Sunday too. Some outsiders were surprised by these responses. But they fit both the old and new codes of NASCAR: first, that racing is what Pettys and Allisons and Earnhardts do, come what may; and second, that NASCAR is a Big Business that doesn't stop for one man, even though it's the man who helped make it big. So they planned to rev the engines and drop the green flag Sunday. No one in the vast, grieving NASCAR family felt that Ironhead Earnhardt, Ironheart's boy, would have wanted it any other way. —*With reporting by Brad Liston/Rockingham, Michelle McCalope/Mooresville, Collette McKenna Parker/Daytona Beach, Eric Roston/New York and Joseph Szczesney/Detroit*

Chat on AOL with TIME*'s Robert Sullivan about* NASCAR *at 7 p.m. E.T. on Wednesday.* **Keyword: LIVE**